

THE 6 SECRET TEACHINGS OF T'AIKUNG

1 CIVIL

01. King Wen's Teacher

King Wen intended to go hunting, so Pien, the Scribe, performed divination to inquire about his prospects. The Scribe reported: "While hunting on the north bank of the Wei river you will get a great catch. It will not be any form of dragon, nor a tiger or great bear. According to the signs, you will find a duke or marquis there whom Heaven has sent to be your teacher. If employed as your assistant, you will flourish and the benefits will extend to three generations of Chou kings."

King Wen asked: "Do the signs truly signify this?"

The Scribe Pien replied: "My Supreme Ancestor, the Scribe Ch'ou, when performing divination for the Sage Emperor Shun, obtained comparable indications. Emperor Shun then found Kao-yao to assist him."

King Wen then observed a vegetarian regime for three days to purify himself, then mounted his hunting chariot. Driving his hunting horses, he went out to hunt on the northern bank of the Wei river. Finally he saw the T'ai Kung sitting on a grass mat fishing. King Wen greeted him courteously and then asked: "Do you take pleasure in fishing?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "The True Man of Worth² takes pleasure in attaining his ambitions; the common man takes pleasure in succeeding in his [ordinary] affairs. Now my fishing is very much like this."

"What do you mean it is like it?" inquired the king.

The T'ai Kung responded: "In fishing there are three forms of authority:³ the ranks of salary, death, and offices. Fishing is the means to obtain what you seek. Its nature is deep, and from it much greater principles can be discerned."

King Wen said: "I would like to hear about its nature."

The T'ai Kung elaborated: "When the source is deep, the water flows actively. When the water flows actively, fish spawn there. This is nature. When

the roots are deep, the tree is tall. When the tree is tall, fruit is produced. This is nature. When True Men of Worth have sympathies and views in common, they will be drawn together. When they are drawn together affairs arise.⁴ This is nature.

“Speech and response are the adornment of inner emotions. Speaking about true nature is the pinnacle of affairs. Now if I speak about true nature, without avoiding any topic, will you find it abhorrent?”

King Wen replied: “Only a man of true humanity⁵ can accept corrections and remonstrance. I have no abhorrence of true nature, so what is your meaning?”

The T'ai Kung said: “When the line is thin and the bait glittering, only small fish will eat it. When the line is heavier and the bait fragrant, medium-sized fish will eat it. But when the line is heavy and the bait generous, large fish will eat it. When the fish take the bait, they will be caught on the line. When men take their salary, they will submit to the ruler. When you catch fish with bait, the fish can be killed. When you catch men with remuneration, they can be made to exhaust their abilities for you. If you use your family to gain the state, the state can be plucked. If you use your state, the world can be completely acquired.

“Alas, flourishing and florid, although they assemble together they will be scattered! Silent and still, the Sage Ruler's glory will inevitably extend far! Subtle and mysterious, the Virtue of the Sage Ruler as it attracts the people! He alone sees it. Wondrous and joyful, the plans of the Sage Ruler through which everyone seeks and returns to their appropriate places, while he establishes the measures that will gather in their hearts.”

King Wen inquired: “How shall we proceed to establish measures so that All under Heaven will give their allegiance?”

The T'ai Kung said: “All under Heaven is not one man's domain. All under Heaven means just that, all under Heaven. Anyone who shares profit with all the people under Heaven will gain the world. Anyone who monopolizes its profits will lose the world. Heaven has its seasons, Earth its resources. Being capable of sharing these in common with the people is true humanity. Wherever there is true humanity, All under Heaven will give their allegiance.

“Sparing the people from death, eliminating the hardships of the people, relieving the misfortunes of the people, and sustaining the people in their extremities is Virtue. Wherever there is Virtue, All under Heaven will give their allegiance.

“Sharing worries, pleasures, likes, and dislikes with the people constitutes righteousness. Where there is righteousness the people will go.

“In general, people hate death and take pleasure in life. They love Virtue and incline to profit. The ability to produce profit accords with the Tao. Where the Tao resides, All under Heaven will give their allegiance.”

King Wen bowed twice and said: “True wisdom! Do I dare not accept Heaven’s edict and mandate?”

He had the T’ai Kung ride in the chariot and returned with him, establishing him as his teacher.

02. Fullness and Emptiness

King Wen inquired of the T’ai Kung: “The world is replete with a dazzling array of states—some full, others empty, some well ordered, others in chaos. How does it come to be thus? Is it that the moral qualities of these rulers are not the same? Or that the changes and transformations of the seasons of Heaven naturally cause it to be thus?”

The T’ai Kung said: “If the ruler lacks moral worth, then the state will be in danger and the people in turbulence. If the ruler is a Worthy or a Sage, then the state will be at peace and the people well ordered. Fortune and misfortune lie with the ruler, not with the seasons of Heaven.”

King Wen: “May I hear about the Sages of antiquity?”

T’ai Kung: “Former generations referred to Emperor Yao, in his kingship over the realm in antiquity, as a Worthy ruler.”

King Wen: “What was his administration like?”

T’ai Kung: “When Yao was king of the world he did not adorn himself with gold, silver, pearls, and jade.⁷ He did not wear brocaded, embroidered, or elegantly decorated clothes. He did not look at strange, odd, rare, or unusual things. He did not treasure items of amusement nor listen to licentious music. He did not whitewash the walls around the palace or the buildings nor decoratively carve the beams, square and round rafters, and pillars. He did not even trim the reeds that grew all about his courtyards. He used a deerskin robe to ward off the cold, while simple clothes covered his body. He ate coarse millet and unpolished grains and thick soups from rough vegetables. He did not, through the [untimely imposition of] labor service, injure the people’s seasons for agriculture and sericulture. He reduced his desires and constrained his will, managing affairs by nonaction.

“He honored the positions of the officials who were loyal, upright, and upheld the laws, and made generous the salaries of those who were pure and scrupulous and loved people. He loved and respected those among the people who were filial and compassionate, and he comforted and encouraged those who exhausted their strength in agriculture and sericulture. Pennants

distinguished the virtuous from the evil, being displayed at the gates of the village lanes. He tranquilized his heart and rectified the constraints [of social forms].⁸ With laws and measures he prohibited evil and artifice.

“Among those he hated, if anyone had merit he would invariably reward him. Among those he loved, if anyone were guilty of an offense he would certainly punish him. He preserved and nurtured the widows, widowers, orphans, and solitary elderly and gave aid to the families who had suffered misfortune and loss.

“What he allotted to himself was extremely meager, the taxes and services he required of the people extremely few. Thus the myriad peoples were prosperous and happy and did not have the appearance of suffering from hunger and cold. The hundred surnames revered their ruler as if he were the sun and moon and gave their emotional allegiance as if he were their father and mother.”

King Wen: “Great is the Worthy and Virtuous ruler!”

03. The Affairs of the State

King Wen said to the T'ai Kung: “I would like to learn about the affair of administering the state. If I want to have the ruler honored and the people settled, how should I proceed?”

T'ai Kung: “Just love the people.”

King Wen: “How does one love the people?”

T'ai Kung: “Profit them, do not harm them. Help them to succeed, do not defeat them. Give them life, do not slay them. Grant, do not take away. Give them pleasure, do not cause them to suffer. Make them happy, do not cause them to be angry.”

King Wen: “May I dare ask you to explain the reasons for these?”

T'ai Kung: “When the people do not lose their fundamental occupations, you have profited them. When the farmers do not lose the agricultural seasons, you have completed them. [When you reduce punishments and fines, you give them life.⁹] When you impose light taxes, you give to them. When you keep your palaces, mansions, terraces, and pavilions few, you give them pleasure. When the officials are pure and neither irritating nor troublesome, you make them happy.

“But when the people lose their fundamental occupations, you harm them. When the farmers lose the agricultural seasons, you defeat them. When they are innocent but you punish them, you kill them. When you impose heavy taxes, you take from them. When you construct numerous palaces, mansions, terraces, and pavilions, thereby wearing out the people's

strength, you make it bitter for them. When the officials are corrupt, irritating, and troublesome, you anger them.

“Thus one who excels at administering a state governs the people as parents govern their beloved children or as an older brother acts toward his beloved younger brother. When they see their hunger and cold, they are troubled for them. When they see their labors and suffering, they grieve for them.

“Rewards and punishments should be implemented as if being imposed upon yourself. Taxes should be imposed as if taking from yourself. This is the Way to love the people.”

04. The Great Forms of Etiquette

King Wen asked T'ai Kung: “What is the proper form of etiquette (//)10 between ruler and minister?”

The T'ai Kung said: “The ruler only needs to draw near to the people; subordinates only need to be submissive. He must approach them, not being distant from any. They must be submissive without hiding anything. The ruler wants only to be all-encompassing; subordinates want only to be settled [in their positions]. If he is all-encompassing he will be like Heaven. If they are settled, they will be like Earth. One Heaven, one Earth—the Great Li is then complete.”

King Wen: “How should the ruler act in his position?”

T'ai Kung: “He should be composed, dignified, and quiet. His softness and self-constraint should be established first. He should excel at giving and not be contentious. He should empty his mind and tranquilize his intentions, awaiting events with uprightness.”

King Wen inquired: “How should the ruler listen to affairs?”

The T'ai Kung replied: “He should not carelessly allow them nor go against opinion and oppose them. If he allows them in this fashion, he will lose his central control; if he opposes them in this way, he will close off his access.

“He should be like the height of a mountain which—when looked up to—cannot be perceived, or the depths of a great abyss which—when measured—cannot be fathomed. Such spiritual and enlightened Virtue is the pinnacle of uprightness and tranquility.”

King Wen inquired: “What should the ruler's wisdom be like?”

The T'ai Kung: “The eye values clarity, the ear values sharpness, the mind values wisdom. If you look with the eyes of All under Heaven, there is nothing you will not see. If you listen with the ears of All under Heaven, there is nothing you will not hear. If you think with the minds of All under Heaven,

there is nothing you will not know. When [you receive information from all directions], just like the spokes converging on the hub of a wheel, your clarity will not be obfuscated.”

05. Clear Instructions

King Wen, lying in bed seriously ill, summoned T'ai Kung Wang and Imperial Prince Fa [King Wu] to his side. “Alas, Heaven is about to abandon me. Chou's state altars will soon be entrusted to you. Today I want you, my teacher, to discuss the great principles of the Tao in order to clearly transmit them to my son and grandsons.”

T'ai Kung said: “My king, what do you want to ask about?”

King Wen: “May I hear about the Tao of the former Sages—where it stops, where it begins?”

T'ai Kung: “If one sees good but is dilatory [in doing it], if the time for action arrives and one is doubtful, if you know something is wrong but you sanction it—it is in these three that the Tao stops. If one is soft and quiet, dignified and respectful, strong yet genial, tolerant yet hard—it is in these four that the Tao begins. Accordingly, when righteousness overcomes desire one will flourish; when desire overcomes righteousness one will perish. When respect overcomes dilatoriness it is auspicious; when dilatoriness overcomes respect one is destroyed.”

06. 6 Preservations

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: “How does the ruler of the state and leader of the people come to lose his position?”

The T'ai Kung said: “He is not cautious about whom he has as associates. The ruler has ‘six preservations’ and ‘three treasures.’”

King Wen asked: “What are the six preservations?”

The T'ai Kung: “The first is called benevolence, the second righteousness, the third loyalty, the fourth trust [good faith], the fifth courage, and the sixth planning. These are referred to as the ‘six preservations.’”

King Wen asked: “How does one go about carefully selecting men using the six preservations?”

T'ai Kung: “Make them rich and observe whether they do not commit offenses. Give them rank and observe whether they do not become arrogant. Entrust them with responsibility and see whether they will not change. Employ them and see whether they will not conceal anything. Endanger them

and see whether they are not afraid. Give them the management of affairs and see whether they are not perplexed.

“If you make them rich but they do not commit offenses, they are benevolent. If you give them rank and they do not grow arrogant, they are righteous. If you entrust them with office and they do not change, they are loyal. If you employ them and they do not conceal anything, they are trustworthy. If you put them in danger and they are not afraid, they are courageous. If you give them the management of affairs and they are not perplexed, they are capable of making plans.

“The ruler must not loan the ‘three treasures’ to other men. If he loans them to other men the ruler will lose his awesomeness.”

King Wen: “May I ask about the three treasures?”

T’ai Kung: “Great agriculture, great industry, and great commerce are referred to as the ‘three treasures.’ If you have the farmers dwell solely in districts of farmers, then the five grains will be sufficient. If you have the artisans dwell solely in districts of artisans, then the implements will be adequate. If you have the merchants dwell solely in districts of merchants, then the material goods will be sufficient.¹¹

“If the three treasures are each settled in their places, then the people will not scheme. Do not allow confusion among their districts, do not allow confusion among their clans. Ministers should not be more wealthy than the ruler. No other cities should be larger than the ruler’s state capital. When the six preservations are fully implemented, the ruler will flourish. When the three treasures are complete, the state will be secure.”

07* Preserving the Territory of the State

King Wen asked the T’ai Kung: “How does one preserve the state’s territory?”

T’ai Kung: “Do not estrange your relatives. Do not neglect the masses. Be conciliatory and solicitous toward nearby states and control the four quarters.

“Do not loan the handles of state to other men.¹² If you loan the handles of state to other men, then you will lose your authority [ch’ian]. Do not dig valleys deeper to increase hills. Do not abandon the foundation to govern the branches. When the sun is at midday you should dry things. If you grasp a knife you must cut. If you hold an ax you must attack.

“If, at the height of the day, you do not dry things in the sun, this is termed losing the time. If you grasp a knife but do not cut anything, you will lose the

moment for profits. If you hold an ax but do not attack, then bandits will come.

“If trickling streams are not blocked, they will become great rivers. If you do not extinguish the smallest flames, what will you do about a great conflagration? If you do not eliminate the two-leaf sapling, how will you use your ax [when the tree has grown]?”

“For this reason the ruler must focus on developing wealth within his state. Without material wealth he has nothing with which to be benevolent. If he does not bespread beneficence he will have nothing with which to bring his relatives together.¹³ If he estranges his relatives it will be harmful. If he loses the common people he will be defeated.

“Do not loan sharp weapons to other men.¹⁴ If you loan sharp weapons to other men, you will be hurt by them and will not live out your allotted span of years.”

King Wen said: “What do you mean by benevolence and righteousness?”

The T'ai Kung: “Respect the common people, unite your relatives. If you respect the common people they will be at peace. And if you unite your relatives they will be happy. This is the way to implement the essential cords of benevolence and righteousness.

“Do not allow other men to snatch away your awesomeness. Rely on your wisdom, follow the constant. Those that submit and accord with you, treat generously with Virtue. Those that oppose you, break with force. If you respect the people and are decisive, then All under Heaven will be peaceful and submissive.”

08. Preserving the State

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: “How does one preserve the state?”

T'ai Kung: “You should observe a vegetarian fast, for I am about to speak to you about the essential principles of Heaven and Earth, what the four seasons produce, the Tao of true humanity and sagacity, and the nature of the people's impulses.”

The King observed a vegetarian regime for seven days, then, facing north, bowed twice and requested instruction.

The T'ai Kung said: “Heaven gives birth to the four seasons, Earth produces the myriad things. Under Heaven there are the people, and the Sage acts as their shepherd.

“Thus the Tao of spring is birth and the myriad things begin to flourish. The Tao of summer is growth; the myriad things mature. The Tao of autumn is gathering; the myriad things are full. The Tao of winter is storing away;

the myriad things are still. When they are full they are stored away; after they are stored away they again revive. No one knows where it ends, no one knows where it begins. The Sage accords with it and models himself on Heaven and Earth. Thus when the realm is well ordered, his benevolence and sagacity are hidden. When All under Heaven are in turbulence, his benevolence and sagacity flourish. This is the true Tao.

“In his position between Heaven and Earth, what the Sage treasures is substantial and vast. Relying on the constant to view it, the people are at peace. But when the people are agitated it creates impulses. When impulses stir, conflict over gain and loss arises. Thus it is initiated in yin, but coalesces in yang. If someone ventures to be the first leader, All under Heaven will unite with him.¹⁵ At the extreme, when things return to normal, do not continue to advance and contend, do not withdraw and yield. If you can preserve the state in this fashion, you will share the splendor of Heaven and Earth.”

09. Honouring the Worthy

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: “Among those I rule,¹⁶ who should be elevated, who should be placed in inferior positions? Who should be selected for employment, who cast aside? How should they be restricted, how stopped?”

The T'ai Kung said: “Elevate the Worthy, and place the unworthy in inferior positions. Choose the sincere and trustworthy, eliminate the deceptive and artful. Prohibit violence and turbulence, stop extravagance and ease. Accordingly, one who exercises kingship over the people recognizes ‘six thieves’ and ‘seven harms.’ ”

King Wen said: “I would like to know about its Tao.”

T'ai Kung: “As for the ‘six thieves’:

“First, if your subordinates build large palaces and mansions, pools and terraces, and amble about enjoying the pleasures of scenery and female musicians, it will injure the king's Virtue.

“Second, when the people are not engaged in agriculture and sericulture but instead give rein to their tempers and travel about as bravados, disdain-ing and transgressing the laws and prohibitions, not following the instructions of the officials, it harms the king's transforming influence.¹⁷

“Third, when officials form cliques and parties—obfuscating the worthy and wise, obstructing the ruler's clarity—it injures the king's authority [ch'uan\.

“Fourth, when the knights are contrary-minded and conspicuously display ‘high moral standards’—taking such behavior to be powerful expression of their ch’i*—and have private relationships with other feudal lords—slighting their own ruler—it injures the king’s awesomeness.

“Fifth, when subordinates disdain titles and positions, are contemptuous of the administrators, and are ashamed to face hardship for their ruler, it injures the efforts of the meritorious subordinates.

“Sixth, when the strong clans encroach on others—seizing what they want, insulting and ridiculing the poor and weak—it injures the work of the common people.

“The ‘seven harms’:

“First, men without knowledge or strategic planning ability are generously rewarded and honored with rank. Therefore, the strong and courageous who regard war lightly take their chances in the field. The king must be careful not to employ them as generals.

“Second, they have reputation but lack substance. What they say is constantly shifting. They conceal the good and point out deficiencies. They view advancement and dismissal as a question of skill. The king should be careful not to make plans with them.

“Third, they make their appearance simple, wear ugly clothes, speak about actionless action in order to seek fame, and talk about non-desire in order to gain profit. They are artificial men, and the king should be careful not to bring them near.

“Fourth, they wear strange caps and belts, and their clothes are overflowing. They listen widely to the disputations of others and speak speciously about unrealistic ideas, displaying them as a sort of personal adornment. They dwell in poverty and live in tranquility, deprecating the customs of the world. They are cunning people, and the king should be careful not to favor them.

“Fifth, with slander, obsequiousness, and pandering, they seek office and rank. They are courageous and daring, treating death lightly, out of their greed for salary and position. They are not concerned with major affairs but move solely out of avarice. With lofty talk and specious discussions, they please the ruler. The king should be careful not to employ them.

“Sixth, they have buildings elaborately carved and inlaid. They promote artifice and flowery adornment to the injury of agriculture. You must prohibit them.

“Seventh, they create magical formulas and weird techniques, practice sorcery and witchcraft, advance unorthodox ways, and circulate inauspicious sayings, confusing and befuddling the good people. The king must stop them.

“Now when the people do not exhaust their strength, they are not our people. If the officers are not sincere and trustworthy, they are not our officers. If the ministers do not offer loyal remonstrance, they are not our ministers. If the officials are not evenhanded, pure, nor love the people, they are not our officials. If the chancellor cannot enrich the state and strengthen the army, harmonize yin and yang, and ensure security for the ruler of a state of ten thousand chariots—and moreover properly control the ministers, set names and realities, make clear rewards and punishments, and give pleasure to the people—he is not our chancellor.

“Now the Tao of the king is like that of a dragon’s head. He dwells in the heights and looks out far. He sees deeply and listens carefully. He displays his form but conceals his nature. He is like the heights of Heaven, which cannot be perceived. He is like the depths of an abyss, which cannot be fathomed. Thus if he should get angry but does not, evil subordinates will arise. If he should execute but does not, great thieves will appear. If strategic military power is not exercised, enemy states will grow strong.”

King Wen said: “Excellent!”

10. Advancing the Worthy

King Wen asked the T’ai Kung: “How does it happen that a ruler may exert himself to advance the Worthy but is unable to obtain any results from such efforts, and in fact the world grows increasingly turbulent, even to the point that he is endangered or perishes?”

T’ai Kung: “If one advances the Worthy but doesn’t employ them, this is attaining the name of ‘advancing the Worthy’ but lacking the substance of ‘using the Worthy.’”

King Wen asked: “Whence comes the error?”

T’ai Kung: “The error lies in wanting to employ men who are popularly praised rather than obtaining true Worthies.”

King Wen: “How is that?”

The T’ai Kung said: “If the ruler takes those that the world commonly praises as being Worthies and those that they condemn as being worthless, then the larger cliques will advance and the smaller ones will retreat. In this situation groups of evil individuals will associate together to obscure the Worthy. Loyal subordinates will die even though innocent. And perverse subordinates will obtain rank and position through empty fame. In this way, as turbulence continues to grow in the world, the state cannot avoid danger and destruction.”

King Wen asked: “How does one advance the Worthy?”

T'ai Kung replied: "Your general and chancellor should divide the responsibility, each of them selecting men based on the names of the positions. In accord with the name of the position, they will assess the substance required. In selecting men, they will evaluate their abilities, making the reality of their talents match the name of the position. When the name matches the reality, you will have realized the Tao for advancing the Worthy."

11. Rewards and Punishments

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "Rewards are the means to preserve the encouragement [of the good], punishments the means to display the rectification of evil. By rewarding one man I want to stimulate a hundred, by punishing one man rectify the multitude. How can I do it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, in employing rewards one values credibility; in employing punishments one values certainty. When rewards are trusted and punishments inevitable wherever the eye sees and the ear hears, then even where they do not see or hear there is no one who will not be transformed in their secrecy. Since the ruler's sincerity extends to Heaven and Earth and penetrates to the spirits, how much the more so to men?"

12. The Tao of the Military

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What is the Tao of the military?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, as for the Tao of the military, nothing surpasses unity. The unified can come alone, can depart alone. The Yellow Emperor said: 'Unification approaches the Tao and touches on the spiritual.' Its employment lies in the subtle;²¹ its conspicuous manifestation lies in the strategic configuration of power; its completion lies with the ruler. Thus the Sage Kings termed weapons evil implements, but when they had no alternative, they employed them.

"Today the Shang king knows about existence, but not about perishing. He knows pleasure, but not disaster. Now existence does not lie in existence, but in thinking about perishing. Pleasure does not lie in pleasure, but in contemplating disaster. Now that you have already pondered the source of such changes, why do you trouble yourself about the future flow of events?"

King Wu said: "Suppose two armies encounter each other. The enemy cannot come forward, and we cannot go forward. Each side goes about establishing fortifications and defenses without daring to be the first to attack. If I want to launch a sudden attack but lack any tactical advantage, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Make an outward display of confusion while actually being well ordered. Show an appearance of hunger while actually being well fed. Keep your sharp weapons within and show only dull and poor weapons outside. Have some troops come together, others split up; some assemble, others scatter.²² Make secret plans, keep your intentions secret. Raise the height of fortifications, and conceal your elite troops. If the officers are silent, not making any sounds, the enemy will not know our preparations. Then if you want to take his western flank, attack the eastern one."

King Wu said: "If the enemy knows my true situation and has penetrated my plans, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The technique for military conquest is to carefully investigate the enemy's intentions and quickly take advantage of them, launching a sudden attack where unexpected."²³

II

MARTIAL SECRET TEACHING

13. Opening Instructions

King Wen, in the capital of Feng, summoned the T'ai Kung. "Alas! The Shang king is extremely perverse, judging the innocent guilty and having them executed. If you assist me in my concern for these people, how might we proceed?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "You should cultivate your Virtue, submit to the guidance of Worthy men, extend beneficence to the people, and observe the Tao of Heaven. If there are no ill omens in the Tao of Heaven, you cannot initiate the movement [to revolt]. If there are no misfortunes in the Tao of Man, your planning cannot precede them. You must first see Heavenly signs and moreover witness human misfortune, and only then can you make plans. You must look at the Shang king's yang aspects [his government], and moreover his yin side [personal deportment], and only then will you know his mind. You must look at his external activities, and moreover his internal ones, and only then will you know his thoughts. You must observe those distant from him and also observe those close to him, and only then will you know his emotions.

"If you implement the Tao, the Tao can be attained. If you enter by the gate, the gate can be entered. If you set up the proper forms of etiquette [/], the li can be perfected. If you fight with the strong, the strong can be conquered. If you can attain complete victory without fighting, without the great army suffering any losses, you will have penetrated even the realm of ghosts and spirits. How marvelous! How subtle!

"If you suffer the same illness as other people and you all aid each other; if you have the same emotions and complete each other; the same hatreds and assist each other; and the same likes and seek them together—then without any armored soldiers you will win; without any battering rams you will have attacked; and without moats and ditches you will have defended.

“The greatest wisdom is not wise; the greatest plans not planned; the greatest courage not courageous; the greatest gain not profitable. If you profit All under Heaven, All under Heaven will be open to you. If you harm All under Heaven, All under Heaven will be closed. All under Heaven is not the property of one man but of All under Heaven. If you take All under Heaven as if pursuing some wild animal, then All under Heaven will want to carve [the realm] up like a piece of meat. If you all ride in the same boat to cross over the water, after completing the crossing you will all have profited. However, if you fail to make the crossing, then you will all suffer the harm.²⁴ [If you act as if you’re all on the same vessel], the empire will be open to your aim, and none will be closed to you.

“He who does not take from the people takes the people. He who does not take [from]²⁵ the people, the people will profit. He who does not take [from] the states, the states will profit. He who does not take from All under Heaven, All under Heaven will profit. Thus the Tao lies in what cannot be seen; affairs lie in what cannot be heard; and victory lies in what cannot be known. How marvelous! How subtle!

“When an eagle is about the attack, it will fly low and draw in its wings.²⁶ When a fierce wild cat is about to strike, it will lay back its ears and crouch down low. When the Sage is about to move, he will certainly display a stupid countenance.

“Now there is the case of Shang, where the people muddle and confuse each other. Mixed up and extravagant, their love of pleasure and sex is endless. This is a sign of a doomed state. I have observed their fields— weeds and grass overwhelm the crops. I have observed their people— the perverse and crooked overcome the straight and upright. I have observed their officials— they are violent, perverse, inhumane, and evil. They overthrow the laws and make chaos of the punishments. Neither the upper nor lower ranks have awakened to this state of affairs. It is time for their state to perish.

“When the sun appears the myriad things are all illuminated. When great righteousness appears the myriad things all profit. When the great army appears the myriad things all submit. Great is the Virtue of the Sage! Listening by himself, seeing by himself, this is his pleasure!”

14. Civil Instructions

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: “What does the Sage preserve?”

The T'ai Kung said: “What worries does he have? What constraints? The myriad things all naturally realize their positions. What constraints, what

worries? The myriad things all flourish. No one realizes the transforming influence of government; moreover, no one realizes the effects of the passing of time.²⁷ The Sage preserves [the Tao of actionless action], and the myriad things are transformed. What is exhausted? When things reach the end they return again to the beginning. Relaxed and complacent he turns about, seeking it. Seeking it he gains it and cannot but store it. Having already stored it he cannot but implement it. Having already implemented it he does not turn about and make it clear [that he did so]. Now because Heaven and Earth do not illuminate themselves, they are forever able to give birth [to the myriad things].²⁸ The Sage does not cast light upon himself so he is able to attain a glorious name.

“The Sages of antiquity assembled people to comprise families, assembled families to compose states, and assembled states to constitute the realm of All under Heaven. They divided the realm and enfeoffed Worthy men to administer the states. They officially designated [this order] the ‘Great Outline.’

“They promulgated the government’s instructions and accorded with the people’s customs. They transformed the multitude of crooked into the straight, changing their form and appearance. Although the customs of the various states were not the same, they all took pleasure in their respective places. The people loved their rulers, so they termed [this transformation] the ‘Great Settlement.’

“Ah, the Sage concentrates on tranquilizing them, the Worthy focuses on rectifying them. The stupid man cannot be upright, therefore he contends with other men. When the ruler labors, punishments become numerous. When punishments are numerous, the people are troubled. When the people are troubled, they leave and wander off. No one, of whatever position, can be settled in his life, and generations on end have no rest. This they termed the ‘Great Loss.’*

“The people of the world are like flowing water. If you obstruct it, it will stop. If you open a way, it will flow. If you keep it quiet, it will be clear. How spiritual! When the Sage sees the beginning, he knows the end.”

King Wen said: “How does one tranquilize them?”

The T’ai Kung: “Heaven has its constant forms, the people have their normal lives. If you share life with All under Heaven, then All under Heaven will be tranquil. The pinnacle accords with them, the next-highest transforms them. When the people are transformed and follow their government, then Heaven takes no action but affairs are complete. The people do not give anything [to the ruler] [so] are enriched of themselves.²⁹ This is the Virtue of the Sage.”

King Wen: "What my lord has said accords with what I embrace. From dawn to night I will think about it, never forgetting it, employing it as our constant principle."

15. Civil Offensive

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "What are the methods for civil³⁰ offensives?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "There are twelve measures for civil offensives.

"First, accord with what he likes in order to accommodate his wishes. He will eventually grow arrogant and invariably mount some perverse affair. If you can appear to follow along, you will certainly be able to eliminate him.

"Second, become familiar with those he loves in order to fragment his awesomeness. When men have two different inclinations, their loyalty invariably declines. When his court no longer has any loyal ministers, the state altars will inevitably be endangered.

"Third, covertly bribe his assistants, fostering a deep relationship with them. While they will bodily stand in his court, their emotions will be directed outside it. The state will certainly suffer harm.

"Fourth, assist him in his licentiousness and indulgence in music in order to dissipate his will. Make him generous gifts of pearls and jade, and ply him with beautiful women. Speak deferentially, listen respectfully, follow his commands, and accord with him in everything. He will never imagine you might be in conflict with him. Our treacherous measures will then be settled.

"Fifth, treat his loyal officials very generously, but reduce the gifts you provide [to the ruler]. Delay his emissaries; do not listen to their missions. When he eventually dispatches other men, treat them with sincerity, embrace and trust them. The ruler will then again feel you are in harmony with him. If you manage to treat [his formerly loyal officials] very generously, his state can then be plotted against.³¹

"Sixth, make secret alliances with his favored ministers, but visibly keep his less-favored outside officials at a distance. His talented people will then be under external influence, while enemy states encroach upon his territory. Few states in such a situation have survived.

"Seventh, if you want to bind his heart to you, you must offer generous presents. To gather in his assistants, loyal associates, and loved ones, you must secretly show them the gains they can realize by colluding with you. Have them slight their work, and then their preparations will be futile.

"Eighth, gift him with great treasures, and make plans with him. When the plans are successful and profit him, he will have faith in you because of the

profits. This is what is termed 'being closely embraced.' The result of being closely embraced is that he will inevitably be used by us. When someone rules a state but is externally [controlled], his territory will inevitably be defeated.

"Ninth, honor him with praise. Do nothing that will cause him personal discomfort. Display the proper respect accruing to a great power, and your obedience will certainly be trusted. Magnify his honor; be the first to gloriously praise him, humbly embellishing him as a Sage. Then his state will suffer great loss!

"Tenth, be submissive so that he will trust you, and thereby learn about his true situation. Accept his ideas and respond to his affairs as if you were twins. Once you have learned everything, subtly gather in [his power]. Thus when the ultimate day arrives, it will seem as if Heaven itself destroyed him.

"Eleventh, block up his access by means of the Tao. Among subordinates there is no one who does not value rank and wealth nor hate danger and misfortune. Secretly express great respect toward them, and gradually bestow valuable gifts in order to gather in the more outstanding talents. Accumulate your own resources until they become very substantial, but manifest an external appearance of shortage. Covertly bring in wise knights, and entrust them with planning great strategy. Attract courageous knights, and augment their spirit. Even when they are more than sufficiently rich and honored, constantly add to their riches. When your faction has been fully established [you will have attained the objective] referred to as 'blocking his access.' If someone has a state but his access is blocked, how can he be considered as having the state?

"Twelfth, support his dissolute officials in order to confuse him. Introduce beautiful women and licentious sounds in order to befuddle him. Send him outstanding dogs and horses in order to tire him. From time to time allow him great power in order to entice him [to greater arrogance]. Then investigate Heaven's signs, and plot with the world against him.

"When these twelve measures are fully employed, they will become a military weapon. Thus when, as it is said, one 'looks at Heaven above and investigates Earth below' and the proper signs are already visible, attack him."

16. Instructions on According with the People

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "What should one do so that he can govern All under Heaven?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When your greatness overspreads All under Heaven, only then will you be able to encompass it. When your trustworthiness has

overspread All under Heaven, only then will you be able to make covenants with it. When your benevolence has overspread All under Heaven, only then will you be able to embrace it. When your grace has overspread All under Heaven, only then can you preserve it. When your authority covers the world, only then will you be able not to lose it. If you govern without doubt, then the revolutions of Heaven will not be able to shift [your rule] nor the changes of the seasons be able to affect it. Only when these six are complete will you be able to establish a government for All under Heaven.

“Accordingly, one who profits All under Heaven will find All under Heaven open to him. One who harms All under Heaven will find All under Heaven closed to him. If one gives life to All under Heaven, All under Heaven will regard him as Virtuous. If one kills All under Heaven, All under Heaven will regard him as a brigand. If one penetrates to All under Heaven, All under Heaven will be accessible to him; if one impoverishes All under Heaven, All under Heaven will regard him as their enemy. One who gives peace to All under Heaven, All under Heaven will rely on; one who endangers All under Heaven, All under Heaven will view as a disaster. All under Heaven is not the realm of one man. Only one who possesses the Tao can dwell [in the position of authority].”

17. 3 Doubts

King Wu inquired of the T'ai Kung: “I want to attain our aim [of overthrowing the Shang], but I have three doubts. I am afraid that our strength will be inadequate to attack the strong, to estrange his close supporters within the court, and disperse his people. What should I do?”

The T'ai Kung replied: “Accord with the situation, be very cautious in making plans, and employ your material resources. Now in order to attack the strong, you must nurture them to make them even stronger, and increase them to make them even more extensive. What is too strong will certainly break; what is too extended must have deficiencies.³² Attack the strong through his strength. Cause the estrangement of his favored officials by using his favorites, and disperse his people by means of the people.³³

“Now in the Tao of planning, thoroughness and secrecy are treasured. You should become involved with him in numerous affairs and ply him with temptations of profit. Conflict will then surely arise.

“If you want to cause his close supporters to become estranged from him, you must do it by using what they love—making gifts to those he favors, giving them what they want. Tempt them with what they find profitable, thereby making them disaffected, and cause them to be unable to attain their

ambitions. Those who covet profits will be extremely happy at the prospects, and their remaining doubts will be ended.

“Now without doubt the Tao for attacking is to first obfuscate the king’s clarity and then attack his strength, destroying his greatness and eliminating the misfortune of the people. Debauch him with beautiful women, entice him with profit. Nurture him with flavors, and provide him with the company of female musicians. Then after you have caused his subordinates to become estranged from him, you must cause the people to grow distant from him while never letting him know your plans. Appear to support him and draw him into your trap. Do not let him become aware of what is happening, for only then can your plan be successful.

“When bestowing your beneficence on the people, you cannot begrudge the expense. The people are like cows and horses. Frequently make gifts of food and clothing and follow up by loving them.³⁴

“The mind is the means to open up knowledge; knowledge the means to open up the source of wealth; and wealth the means to open up the people. Gaining the allegiance of the people is the way to attract Worthy men. When one is enlightened by Sagely advisers, he can become king of all the world.”

I11

DRAGON

18. The Wings of the King

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "When the king commands the army he must have 'legs and arms' [top assistants] and 'feathers and wings' [aides] to bring about his awesomeness and spiritualness. How should this be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever one mobilizes the army it takes the commanding general as its fate. Its fate lies in a penetrating understanding of all aspects, not clinging to one technique. In accord with their abilities assign duties—each one taking charge of what they are good at, constantly changing and transforming with the times, to create the essential principles and order. Thus the general has seventy-two 'legs and arms' and 'feathers and wings' in order to respond to the Tao of Heaven. Prepare their number according to method, being careful that they know its orders and principles. When you have all the different abilities and various skills, then the myriad affairs will be complete."

King Wu asked: "May I ask about the various categories?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Fu-hsin [Chief of Planning],³⁵ one: in charge of advising about secret plans for responding to sudden events; investigating Heaven so as to eliminate sudden change; exercising general supervision over all planning; and protecting and preserving the lives of the people.

"Planning officers, five: responsible for planning security and danger; anticipating the unforeseen; discussing performance and ability; making clear rewards and punishments; appointing officers; deciding the doubtful; and determining what is advisable and what is not.

"Astrologers, three: undertaking responsibility for the stars and calendar; observing the wind and ch*t; predicting auspicious days and times; investigating signs and phenomena; verifying disasters and abnormalities; and

knowing Heaven's mind with regard to the moment for completion or abandonment.³⁶

"Topographers, three: in charge of the army's disposition and strategic configuration of power when moving and stopped [and of] information on strategic advantages and disadvantages; precipitous and easy passages, both near and far; and water and dry land, mountains and defiles, so as not to lose the advantages of terrain.

"Strategists, nine: responsible for discussing divergent views; analyzing the probable success or failure of various operations; selecting the weapons and training men in their use; and identifying those who violate the ordinances.

"Supply officers, four: responsible for calculating the requirements for food and water; preparing the food stocks and supplies and transporting the provisions along the route; and supplying the five grains so as to ensure that the army will not suffer any hardship or shortage.

"Officers for Flourishing Awesomeness, four: responsible for picking men of talent and strength; for discussing weapons and armor; for setting up attacks that race like the wind and strike like thunder so that [the enemy] does not know where they come from.

"Secret Signals officers,³⁷ three: responsible for the pennants and drums, for clearly [signaling] to the eyes and ears; for creating deceptive signs and seals [and] issuing false designations and orders; and for stealthily and hastily moving back and forth, going in and out like spirits.

"Legs and Arms, four: responsible for undertaking heavy duties and handling difficult tasks; for the repair and maintenance of ditches and moats; and for keeping the walls and ramparts in repair in order to defend against and repel [the enemy].

"Liaison officers, two: responsible for gathering what has been lost and supplementing what is in error; receiving honored guests; holding discussions and talks; mitigating disasters; and resolving difficulties.

"Officers of Authority, three: responsible for implementing the unorthodox and deceptive; for establishing the different and the unusual, things that people do not recognize; and for putting into effect inexhaustible transformations.¹⁸

"Ears and Eyes, seven: responsible for going about everywhere, listening to what people are saying; seeing the changes; and observing the officers in all four directions and the army's true situation.

"Claws and Teeth, five: responsible for raising awesomeness and martial [spirit]; for stimulating and encouraging the Three Armies, causing them to

risk hardship and attack the enemy's elite troops without ever having any doubts or second thoughts.

"Feathers and Wings, four: responsible for flourishing the name and fame [of the army]; for shaking distant lands [with its image]; and for moving all within the four borders in order to weaken the enemy's spirit.

"Roving officers, eight: responsible for spying on [the enemy's] licentiousness and observing their changes; manipulating their emotions; and observing the enemy's thoughts in order to act as spies.

"Officers of Techniques, two: responsible for spreading slander and falsehoods and for calling on ghosts and spirits in order to confuse the minds of the populace.

"Officers of Prescriptions, three: in charge of the hundred medicines; managing blade wounds; and curing the various maladies.

"Accountants, two: responsible for accounting for the provisions and foodstuffs within the Three Armies' encampments and ramparts; for the fiscal materials employed; and for receipts and disbursements."

19* A Discussion of Generals

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What should a general be?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Generals have five critical talents and ten excesses."

King Wu said: "Dare I ask you to enumerate them?"

The T'ai Kung elaborated: "What we refer to as the five talents are courage, wisdom, benevolence, trustworthiness, and loyalty. If he is courageous he cannot be overwhelmed. If he is wise he cannot be forced into turmoil. If he is benevolent he will love his men. If he is trustworthy he will not be deceitful. If he is loyal he will not be of two minds.

"What are referred to as the ten errors are as follows: being courageous and treating death lightly; being hasty and impatient; being greedy and loving profit; being benevolent but unable to inflict suffering; being wise but afraid; being trustworthy and liking to trust others; being scrupulous and incorruptible but not loving men; being wise but indecisive; being resolute and self-reliant; and being fearful while liking to entrust responsibility to other men.

"One who is courageous and treats death lightly can be destroyed by violence. One who is hasty and impatient can be destroyed by persistence. One who is greedy and loves profit can be bribed. One who is benevolent but unable to inflict suffering can be worn down. One who is wise but fearful can be distressed.

“One who is trustworthy and likes to trust others can be deceived. One who is scrupulous and incorruptible but does not love men can be insulted. One who is wise but indecisive can be suddenly attacked. One who is resolute and self-reliant can be confounded by events. One who is fearful and likes to entrust responsibility to others can be tricked.

“Thus ‘warfare is the greatest affair of state, the Tao of survival or extinction.’³⁹ The fate of the state lies in the hands of the general. The general is the support of the state,’⁴⁰ a man that the former kings all valued. Thus in commissioning a general, you cannot but carefully evaluate and investigate his character.

“Thus it is said that two armies will not be victorious, nor will both be defeated. When the army ventures out beyond the borders, before they have been out ten days—even if a state has not perished—one army will certainly have been destroyed and the general killed.”

King Wu: “Marvelous!”

20. Selecting Generals

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “If a king wants to raise an army, how should he go about selecting and training heroic officers and determining their moral qualifications?”

The T'ai Kung said: “There are fifteen cases where a knight's external appearance and internal character do not cohere. These are:

“He appears to be a Worthy but [actually] is immoral.

“He seems warm and conscientious but is a thief.

“His countenance is reverent and respectful, but his heart is insolent.

“Externally he is incorruptible and circumspect, but he lacks respect.

“He appears perceptive and sharp but lacks such talent.

“He appears profound but lacks all sincerity.

“He appears adept at planning but is indecisive.

“He appears to be decisive and daring but is incapable.

“He appears guileless but is not trustworthy.

“He appears confused and disoriented but on the contrary is loyal and substantial.

“He appears to engage in specious discourse but is a man of merit and achievement.

“He appears courageous but is afraid.

“He seems severe and remote but on the contrary easily befriends men.

“He appears forbidding but on the contrary is quiet and sincere.

“He appears weak and insubstantial, yet when dispatched outside the state there is nothing he does not accomplish, no mission that he does not execute successfully.

“Those who the world disdains the Sage values. Ordinary men do not know these things; only great wisdom can discern the edge of these matters. This is because the knight’s external appearance and internal character do not visibly cohere.”

King Wu asked: “How does one know this?”

The T’ai Kung replied: “There are eight forms of evidence by which you may know it. First, question them and observe the details of their reply. Second, verbally confound and perplex them and observe how they change. Third, discuss things which you have secretly learned to observe their sincerity. Fourth, clearly and explicitly question them to observe their virtue. Fifth, appoint them to positions of financial responsibility to observe their honesty. Sixth, test them with beautiful women to observe their uprightness. Seventh, confront them with difficulties to observe their courage. Eighth, get them drunk to observe their deportment. When all eight have been fully explored, then the Worthy and unworthy can be distinguished.”

21. Appointing the General

King Wu asked the T’ai Kung: “What is the Tao for appointing the commanding general?”

The T’ai Kung said: “When the state encounters danger, the ruler should vacate the Main Hall, summon the general, and charge him as follows: The security or endangerment of the Altars of State all lie with the army’s commanding general. At present such-and-such a state does not act properly submissive. I would like you to lead the army forth to respond to it.’

“After the general has received his mandate, command the Grand Scribe to bore the sacred tortoise shell to divine an auspicious day. Thereafter, to prepare for the chosen day, observe a vegetarian regime for three days, and then go to the ancestral temple to hand over the fu and yueh axes.⁴¹

“After the ruler has entered the gate to the temple, he stands facing west. The general enters the temple gate and stands facing north. The ruler personally takes the yiieh ax and, holding it by the head, passes the handle to the general, saying: ‘From this to Heaven above will be controlled by the General of the Army.’ Then taking the fu axe by the handle, he should give the blade to the general, saying: ‘From this to the depths below will be controlled by the General of the Army. When you see vacuity in the enemy you should advance; when you see substance you should halt.⁴² Do not assume

that the Three Armies are large and treat the enemy lightly. Do not commit yourself to die just because you have received a heavy responsibility. Do not, because you are honored, regard other men as lowly. Do not rely upon yourself alone and contravene the masses. Do not take verbal facility to be a sign of certainty. When the officers have not yet been seated, do not sit. When the officers have not yet eaten, do not eat. You should share heat and cold with them. If you behave in this way the officers and masses will certainly exhaust their strength in fighting to the death.’⁴³

“After the general has received his mandate, he bows and responds to the ruler; ‘I have heard that a country cannot follow the commands of another state’s government, while an army [in the field] cannot follow central government control. Someone of two minds cannot properly serve his ruler; someone in doubt cannot respond to the enemy. I have already received my mandate and taken sole control of the awesome power of the fu and yiieh axes. I do not dare return alive. I would like to request that you condescend to grant complete and sole command to me. If you do not permit it, I dare not accept the post of general.’ The king then grants it, and the general formally takes his leave and departs.”⁴⁴

“Military matters are not determined by the ruler’s commands; they all proceed from the commanding general. When [the commanding general] approaches an enemy and decides to engage in battle, he is not of two minds. In this way there is no Heaven above, no Earth below, no enemy in front, and no ruler to the rear. For this reason the wise make plans for him, the courageous fight for him. Their spirit soars to the blue clouds; they are swift like galloping steeds. Even before the blades clash, the enemy surrenders submissively.

“War is won outside the borders of the state, but the general’s merit is established within it. Officials are promoted and receive the highest rewards; the hundred surnames rejoice; and the general is blameless. For this reason the winds and rains will be seasonable; the five grains will grow abundantly; and the altars of state will be secure and peaceful.”

King Wu said: “Excellent.”

22. The Awesomeness of the General

King Wu asked: “How does the general create awesomeness? How can he be enlightened? How can he make his prohibitions effective and get his orders implemented?”

The T’ai Kung said: “The general creates awesomeness by executing the great, and becomes enlightened by rewarding the small. Prohibitions are

made effective and laws implemented by careful scrutiny in the use of punishments. Therefore if by executing one man the entire army will quake, kill him. If by rewarding one man the masses will be pleased, reward him. In executing, value the great; in rewarding, value the small. When you kill the powerful and the honored, this is punishment that reaches the pinnacle. When rewards extend down to the cowherds, grooms, and stablemen, these are rewards penetrating downward to the lowest. When punishments reach the pinnacle and rewards penetrate to the lowest, then your awesomeness has been effected.”

23. Encouraging the Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “When we attack I want the masses of the Three Armies to contend with each other to scale the wall first, and compete with each other to be in the forefront when we fight in the field. When they hear the sound of the gongs [to retreat] they will be angry, and when they hear the sound of the drums [to advance] they will be happy. How can we accomplish this?”

The T'ai Kung said: “A general has three techniques for attaining victory.”

King Wu asked: “May I ask what they are?”

The T'ai Kung: “If in winter the general does not wear a fur robe, in summer does not carry a fan, and in the rain does not set up a canopy, he is called a ‘general of proper form.’ Unless the general himself submits to these observances, he will not have the means to know the cold and warmth of the officers and soldiers.

“If, when they advance into ravines and obstacles or encounter muddy terrain, the general always takes the first steps, he is termed a ‘general of strength.’ If the general does not personally exert his strength, he has no means to know the labors and hardships of the officers and soldiers.

“If only after the men are settled in their encampment does the general retire; only after all the cooks have finished their cooking does he go in to eat; and if the army does not light fires to keep warm he also does not have one, he is termed a ‘general who stifles desire.’ Unless the general himself practices stifling his desires, he has no way to know the hunger and satiety of the officers and troops.

“The general shares heat and cold, labor and suffering, hunger and satiety with the officers and men. Therefore when the masses of the Three Armies hear the sound of the drum they are happy, and when they hear the sound of the gong they are angry. When attacking a high wall or crossing a deep lake,

under a hail of arrows and stones, the officers will compete to be first to scale the wall. When the naked blades clash, the officers will compete to be the first to go forward. It is not because they like death and take pleasure in being wounded, but because the general knows their feelings of heat and cold, hunger and satiety, and clearly displays his knowledge of their labor and suffering.”

24. Secret Tallies

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “If we lead the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where the Three Armies suddenly suffer some delay or require urgent action—perhaps a situation to our advantage, or one to our disadvantage—and I46 want to communicate between those nearby and those more distant, respond to the outside from the inside, in order to supply the use of the Three Armies—how should we do it?”

The T'ai Kung said: “The ruler and his generals have a system of secret tallies, altogether consisting of eight grades.

“There is a tally signifying a great victory over the enemy, one foot long.

“There is a tally for destroying the enemy's army and killing their general, nine inches long.

“There is a tally for forcing the surrender of the enemy's walls and capturing the town, eight inches long.

“There is a tally for driving the enemy back and reporting deep penetration, seven inches long.

“There is a tally to alert the masses to prepare for stalwart defensive measures, six inches long.

“There is a tally requesting supplies and additional soldiers, five inches long.

“There is a tally signifying the army's defeat and the general's death, four inches long.

“There is a tally signifying the loss of all advantages and the army's surrender, three inches long.

“Detain all those who bring in and present tallies, and if the information from the tally should leak out, execute all those who heard and told about it. These eight tallies, which only the ruler and general should secretly know, provide a technique for covert communication that will not allow outsiders to know the true situation. Accordingly, even though the enemy has the wisdom of a Sage, no one will comprehend their significance.”

King Wu said: “Excellent.”

25. Secret Letters

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "The army has been led deep into the territory of the feudal lords and the commanding general⁴⁷ wants to bring the troops together, implement inexhaustible changes, and plan for unfathomable advantages. These matters are quite numerous; the simple tally is not adequate to clearly express them. As they are separated by some distance, verbal communications cannot get through. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever you have secret affairs and major considerations, letters should be employed rather than tallies. The ruler sends a letter to the general; the general uses a letter to query the ruler. The letters are [composed] in one unit, then divided. They are sent out in three parts, with only one person knowing the contents. 'Divided' means it is separated into three parts. 'Sent out in three parts, with only one person knowing' means there are three messengers, each carrying one part; and when the three are compared together, only then does one know the contents. This is referred to as a 'secret letter.' Even if the enemy has the wisdom of a Sage, they will not be able to recognize the contents."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

26. The Strategic Power of the Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What is the Tao for aggressive warfare?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Strategic power is exercised in accord with the enemy's movements. Changes stem from the confrontation between the two armies. Unorthodox [ch'i] and orthodox [cheng] tactics are produced from the inexhaustible resources [of the mind]. Thus the greatest affairs are not discussed, and the employment of troops is not spoken about. Moreover, words which discuss ultimate affairs are not worth listening to.⁴⁸ The employment of troops is not so definitive as to be visible. They go suddenly, they come suddenly. Only someone who can exercise sole control, without being governed by other men, is a military weapon.

"If [your plans]⁴⁹ are heard about, the enemy will make counterplans. If you are perceived, they will plot against you. If you are known, they will put you in difficulty. If you are fathomed, they will endanger you.

"Thus one who excels in warfare does not await the deployment of forces. One who excels at eliminating the misfortunes of the people manages them before they appear. Conquering the enemy means being victorious over the

formless.⁵⁰ The superior fighter does not engage in battle. Thus one who fights and attains victory in front of naked blades is not a good general. One who makes preparations after [the battle] has been lost is not a Superior Sage! One whose skill is the same as the masses is not a State Artisan.

“In military affairs nothing is more important than certain victory. In employing the army nothing is more important than obscurity and silence. In movement nothing is more important than the unexpected. In planning nothing is more important than not being knowable.

“To be the first to gain victory, initially display some weakness to the enemy and only afterward do battle. Then your effort will be half, but the achievement will be doubled.

“The Sage takes his signs from the movements of Heaven and Earth; who knows his principles? He accords with the Tao of yin and yang and follows their seasonal activity. He follows the cycles of fullness and emptiness of Heaven and Earth, taking them as his constant. All things have life and death in accord with the form of Heaven and Earth. Thus it is said that if one fights before seeing the situation, even if he is more numerous, he will certainly be defeated.

“One who excels at warfare will await events in the situation without making any movement. When he sees he can be victorious, he will arise; if he sees he cannot be victorious, he will desist. Thus it is said he does not have any fear, he does not vacillate. Of the many harms that can beset an army, vacillation is the greatest. Of disasters that can befall an army, none surpasses doubt.

“One who excels in warfare will not lose an advantage when he perceives it or be doubtful when he meets the moment. One who loses an advantage or lags behind the time for action will, on the contrary, suffer from disaster. Thus the wise follow the time and do not lose an advantage; the skillful are decisive and have no doubts. For this reason when there is a sudden clap of thunder, there is not time to cover the ears; when there is a flash of lightning, there is not time to close the eyes. Advance as if suddenly startled; employ your troops as if deranged.⁵¹ Those who oppose you will be destroyed; those who come near will perish. Who can defend against such an attack?

“Now when matters are not discussed and the general preserves their secrecy, he is spirit-like. When things are not manifest but he discerns them, he is enlightened. Thus if one knows the Tao of spirit and enlightenment, no enemies will act against him in the field, nor will any state stand against him.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

27. The Unorthodox Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung, "In general, what are the great essentials in the art of employing the army?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "The ancients who excelled at warfare were not able to wage war above Heaven, nor could they wage war below Earth.⁵² Their success and defeat in all cases proceeded from the spiritual employment of strategic power [shih]. Those who attained it flourished; those who lost it perished.

"Now when our two armies, opposing each other, have deployed their armored soldiers and established their battle arrays, releasing some of your troops to create chaos in the ranks is the means by which to fabricate deceptive changes.

"Deep grass and dense growth are the means by which to effect a concealed escape.

"Valleys with streams and treacherous ravines are the means by which to stop chariots and defend against cavalry.

"Narrow passes and mountain forests are the means by which a few can attack a large force*

"Marshy depressions and secluded dark areas are the means by which to conceal your appearance.

"(Deploying] on clear, open ground without any concealment is the means by which to fight with strength and courage.⁵³

"Being as swift as a flying arrow, attacking as suddenly as the release of a crossbow are the means by which to destroy brilliant plans.

"Setting up ingenious ambushes and preparing unorthodox troops, stretching out distant formations to deceive and entice the enemy are the means by which to destroy the enemy's army and capture its general.

"Dividing your troops into four and splitting them into five are the means by which by attack their circular formations and destroy their square ones.

"Taking advantage of their fright and fear is the means by which one can attack ten.

"Taking advantage of their exhaustion and encamping at dusk are the means by which ten can attack one hundred.

"Unorthodox technical skills are the means by which to cross deep waters and ford rivers.

"Strong crossbows and long weapons are the means by which to fight across water.

“Distant observation posts and far-off scouts, explosive haste and feigned retreats are the means by which to force the surrender of walled fortifications and compel the submission of towns.

“Drumming an advance and setting up a great tumult are the means by which to implement unorthodox plans.

“High winds and heavy rain are the means by which to strike the front and seize the rear.

“Disguising some men as enemy emissaries is the means by which to sever their supply lines.

“Forging [enemy] commands and orders and wearing the same clothes as the enemy are the means by which to be prepared for their retreat.

“Warfare which is invariably in accord with righteousness is the means by which to incite the masses and be victorious over the enemy.

“Honored ranks and generous rewards are the means by which to encourage obeying orders.

“Severe punishments and heavy fines are the means by which to force the weary and indolent to advance.

“Happiness and anger, bestowing and taking away, civil and martial measures, at times slowly, at others rapidly—all these are the means by which to order and harmonize the Three Armies, to govern and unify subordinates.

“Occupying high ground is the means by which to be alert and assume a defensive posture.

“Holding defiles and narrows is the means by which to be solidly entrenched.

“Mountain forests and dense growth are the means by which to come and go silently.

“Deep moats, high ramparts, and large reserves of supplies are the means by which to sustain your position for a long time.

“Thus it is said, ‘One who does not know how to plan for aggressive warfare cannot be spoken with about the enemy. One who cannot divide and move [his troops about] cannot be spoken with about unorthodox strategies.⁵⁴ One who does not have a penetrating understanding of both order and chaos cannot be spoken with about changes.’

“Accordingly it is said:

“ ‘If the general is not benevolent, then the Three Armies will not be close to him.

“If the general is not courageous, then the Three Armies will not be fierce.

“ ‘If the general is not wise, then the Three Armies will be greatly perplexed.

“ ‘If the general is not perspicacious, then the Three Armies will be confounded.

“ ‘If the general is not quick-witted and acute, then the Three Armies will lose the moment.⁵⁵

“ ‘If the general is not constantly alert, the Three Armies will waste their preparations.

“ ‘If the general is not strong and forceful, then the Three Armies will fail in their duty.’

“Thus the general is their Master of Fate. The Three Armies are ordered with him, and they are disordered with him. If one obtains a Worthy to serve as general, the army will be strong and the state will prosper. If one does not obtain a Worthy as general, the army will be weak and the state will perish.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

28. The 5 Notes

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “From the sound of the pitch pipes, can we know the fluctuations of the Three Armies, foretell victory and defeat?”

The T'ai Kung said: “Your question is profound indeed! Now there are twelve pipes, with five major notes: kung, shang, chiao, cheng, and yii.⁵⁶ These are the true, orthodox sounds, unchanged for over ten thousand generations.

“The spirits of the five phases are constants of the Tao.⁵⁷ Metal, wood, water, fire, and earth—each according to their conquest relationship—[can be employed to] attack the enemy. In antiquity, during the period of the Three Sage Emperors, they used the nature of vacuity and non-action to govern the hard and strong. They didn't have characters for writing; everything proceeded from the five phases. The Tao of the five phases is the naturalness of Heaven and Earth. The division into the six chia⁵⁸ is [a realization] of marvelous and subtle spirit.

“Their method was, when the day had been clear and calm—without any clouds, wind, or rain—to send light cavalry out in the middle of the night to approach the enemy's fortifications. Stopping about nine hundred paces away, they would all lift their pipes to their ears and then yell out to startle the enemy. There would be a very small, subtle sound that would respond in the pitch pipes.

“If the chiao note responded among the pipes, it indicated a white tiger.

“If the cheng note responded in the pipes, it indicated the Mysterious Military.

“If the shang note responded in the pipes, it indicated the Vermillion Bird.

“If you yii note responded in the pipes, it indicated the Hooked Formation.

“If none of the five notes responded in the pipes, it was kung, signifying a Green Dragon.

“These signs of the five phases are evidence to assist in the conquest, the subtle moments of success and defeat.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

The T'ai Kung continued: “These subtle, mysterious notes all have external indications.”

“How can we know them?” King Wu asked.

The T'ai Kung replied: “When the enemy has been startled into movement, listen for them. If you hear the sound of the pao drum, then it is cbiao. If you see the flash of lights from a fire, then it is cheng. If you hear the sounds of bronze and iron, of spears and halberds, then it is shang. If you hear the sound of people sighing, it is yii. If all is silent, without any sound, then it is kung. These five are the signs of sound and appearance.”

29. The Indications of the Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “Before engaging in battle I want to first know the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, to foresee indications of victory or defeat. How can this be done?”

The T'ai Kung replied: “Indications of victory or defeat will be first manifest in their spirit. The enlightened general will investigate them, for they will be evidenced in the men.

“Clearly observe the enemy's coming and going, advancing and withdrawing. Investigate his movements and periods at rest, whether they speak about portents, what the officers and troops report. If the Three Armies are exhilarated [and] the officers and troops fear the laws; respect the general's commands; rejoice with each other in destroying the enemy; boast to each other about their courage and ferocity; and praise each other for their awesomeness and martial demeanor—these are indications of a strong enemy.

“If the Three Armies have been startled a number of times, the officers and troops no longer maintaining good order; they terrify each other [with stories about] the enemy's strength; they speak to each other about the disadvantages; they anxiously look about at each other, listening carefully; they talk incessantly of ill omens, myriad mouths confusing each other; they fear neither laws nor orders and do not regard their general seriously—these are indications of weakness.

“When the Three Armies are well ordered; the deployment’s strategic configuration of power solid—with deep moats and high ramparts—and moreover they enjoy the advantages of high winds and heavy rain; the army is untroubled; the signal flags and pennants point to the front; the sound of the gongs and bells rises up and is clear; and the sound of the small and large drums clearly rises—these are indications of having obtained spiritual, enlightened assistance, foretelling a great victory.

“When their formations are not solid; their flags and pennants confused and entangled with each other; they go contrary to the advantages of high wind and heavy rain; their officers and troops are terrified; and their ch’i broken while they are not unified; their war horses have been frightened and run off, their military chariots have broken axles; the sound of their gongs and bells sinks down and is murky; the sound of their drums is wet and damp—these are indications foretelling a great defeat.

“In general, when you attack city walls or surround towns, if the color of their ch’i is liked dead ashes, the city can be slaughtered.⁵⁹ If the city’s ch’i drifts out to the north, the city can be conquered. If the city’s ch’i goes out and drifts to the west, the city can be forced to surrender. If the city’s ch’i goes out and drifts to the south, it cannot be taken. If the city’s ch’i goes out and drifts to the east, the city cannot be attacked. If the city’s ch’i goes out but then drifts back in, the city’s ruler has already fled. If the city’s ch’i goes out and overspreads our army, the soldiers will surely fall ill. If the city’s ch’i goes out and just rises up without any direction,⁶⁰ the army will have to be employed for a long time. If, when you have attacked a walled city or surrounded a town for more than ten days without thunder or rain, you must hastily abandon it, for the city must have a source of great assistance.

“Those are the means by which to know that you can attack and then go on to mount the attack, or that you should not attack and therefore stop.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

30. Agricultural Implements

King Wu asked the T’ai Kung: “If All under Heaven are at peace and settled, while the state is not engaged in any conflicts, can we dispense with maintaining the implements of war? Can we forego preparing equipment for defense?”

The T’ai Kung said: “The implements for offense and defense are fully found in ordinary human activity. Digging sticks serve as chevaux-de-frise and caltrops. Oxen and horse-pulled wagons can be used in the encampment and as covering shields. The different hoes can be used as spears and spear-

tipped halberds. Raincoats of straw and large umbrellas serve as armor and protective shields. Large hoes, spades, axes, saws, mortars, and pestles are tools for attacking walls. Oxen and horses are the means to transport provisions. Chickens and dogs serve as lookouts. The cloth that women weave serves as flags and pennants.

“The method that the men use for leveling the fields is the same for attacking walls. The skill needed in spring to cut down grass and thickets is the same as needed for fighting against chariots and cavalry. The weeding methods used in summer are the same as used in battle against foot soldiers. The grain harvested and the firewood cut in the fall will be provisions for the military. In the winter well-filled granaries and storehouses will ensure a solid defense.

“The units of five found in the fields and villages will provide the tallies and good faith that bind the men together. The villages have officials and the offices have chiefs who can lead the army. The villages have walls surrounding them, which are not crossed; they provide the basis for the division into platoons. The transportation of grain and the cutting of hay provide for the state storehouses and armories. The skills used in repairing the inner and outer walls in the spring and fall, in maintaining the moats and channels are used to build ramparts and fortifications.

“Thus the tools for employing the military are completely found in ordinary human activity. One who is good at governing a state will take them from ordinary human affairs. Then they must be made to accord with the good management of the six animals,⁶¹ to the opening up of wild lands, and the settling of the people where they dwell. The husband has a number of acres that he farms, the wife a measured amount of material to weave—this is the Way to enrich the state and strengthen the army.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

IV TIGER

31. The Equipment of the Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "When the king mobilizes the Three Armies, are there any rules for determining the army's equipment, such as the implements for attack and defense, including type and quantity?"

The T'ai Kung said: "A great question, my king! The implements for attack and defense each have their own categories. This results in the great awesomeness of the army."⁶²

King Wu said: "I would like to hear about them."

The T'ai Kung replied: "As for the basic numbers when employing the army, if commanding ten thousand armed soldiers the rules for [the various types of equipment and their) employment are as follows.

"Thirty-six Martial Protective Large Fu-hsü Chariots. Skilled officers, strong crossbowmen, spear bearers, and halberdiers—total of twenty-four for each flank [and the rear].⁶³ The chariots have eight-foot wheels. On it are set up pennants and drums which, according to the Art of War, are referred to as 'Shaking Fear.' They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat strong enemies.

"Seventy-two Martial-Flanking Large Covered Spear and Halberd Fu-hsü Chariots.⁶⁴ Skilled officers, strong crossbowmen, spear bearers, and halberdiers comprise the flanks. They have five-foot wheels and winch-powered linked crossbows which fire multiple arrows for self-protection.⁶⁵ They are used to penetrate solid formations and defeat strong enemies.

"One hundred and forty Flank-supporting Small Covered Fu-hsü Chariots equipped with winch-powered linked crossbows to fire multiple arrows for self-protection. They have deer wheels and are used to penetrate solid formations and defeat strong enemies.

"Thirty-six Great Yellow Triple-linked Crossbow Large Fu-hsü Chariots. Skilled officers, strong crossbowmen, spear bearers, and halberdiers com-

prise the flanks, with 'flying duck' and 'lightning's shadow' arrows for self-protection. 'Flying duck' arrows have red shafts and white feathers, with bronze arrowheads. 'Lightning's shadow' arrows have green shafts and red feathers, with iron heads.⁶⁶ In the daytime they display pennants of red silk six feet long by six inches wide, which shimmer in the light. At night they hang pennants of white silk, also six feet long by six inches wide, which appear like meteors. They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat infantry and cavalry.

"Thirty-six Great Fu-hsii Attack Chariots.⁶⁷ Carrying Praying Mantis Martial warriors, they can attack both horizontal and vertical formations and can defeat the enemy.

"Baggage Chariots [for repelling] mounted invaders, also called 'Lightning Chariots.' The Art of War refers to their use in 'lightning attacks.'⁶⁸ They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat both infantry and cavalry.

"One hundred and sixty Spear and Halberd Fu-hsii Light Chariots [for repelling] night invaders from the fore. Each carries three Praying Mantis Martial knights. The Art of War refers to them as mounting 'thunder attacks.' They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat both infantry and cavalry.

"Iron truncheons with large square heads weighing twelve catties, and shafts more than five feet long, twelve hundred of them. Also termed 'Heaven's Truncheon.'

"The Great Handle Fu Ax with an eight-inch blade, weighing eight catties, and a shaft more than five feet long, twelve hundred of them. Also termed 'Heaven's Yieh Ax.'

"Also the Iron Square-headed Pounder, weighing eight catties, with a shaft of more than five feet, twelve hundred. Also termed 'Heaven's Pounder.' They are used to defeat infantry and hordes of mounted invaders.

"The Flying Hook, eight inches long. The curve of the hook is five inches long, the shaft is more than six feet long. Twelve hundred of them. They are thrown into masses of soldiers.

"To defend the Three Armies deploy Fu-hsii [chariots] equipped with wooden Praying Mantises and sword blades, each twenty feet across, altogether one hundred and twenty of them. They are also termed *chevaux-de-frise*.⁶⁹ On open, level ground the infantry can use them to defeat chariots and cavalry.

"Wooden caltrops which stick out of the ground about two feet five inches, one hundred twenty. They are employed to defeat infantry and cavalry, to urgently press the attack against invaders, and to intercept their flight.

“Short-axle Quick-turning Spear and Halberd Fu-hsü Chariots, one hundred twenty. They were employed by the Yellow Emperor to vanquish Ch’ih-yu. They are used to defeat both infantry and cavalry, to urgently press the attack against the invaders, and to intercept their flight.

“For narrow roads and small bypaths, set out iron caltrops eight inches wide, having hooks four inches high and shafts of more than six feet, twelve hundred. They are for defeating retreating⁷¹ cavalry.

“If, in the darkness of night the enemy should suddenly press an attack and the naked blades clash, stretch out a ground net and spread out two arrowheaded caltrops connected together with ‘weaving women’-type caltrops on both sides. The points of the blades should be about two feet apart. Twelve thousand sets.

“For fighting in wild expanses and in the middle of tall grass, there is the square-shank, arrow-shaped spear, twelve hundred of them. The method for deploying these spears is to have them stick out of the ground one foot five inches. They are used to defeat infantry and cavalry, to urgently press the attack against invaders, and to intercept their flight.

“On narrow roads, small bypaths, and constricted terrain, set out iron chains, one hundred twenty of them, to defeat infantry and cavalry, urgently press the attack against the invaders, and intercept their flight.

“For the protection and defense of the gates to fortifications, there are small [mobile] shields with spear and halberd [tips affixed], twelve of them, and winch-driven, multiple arrow crossbows for self-protection.⁷²

“For the protection of the Three Armies, there are Heaven’s Net and Tiger’s Drop, linked together with chains, one hundred twenty of them. One array is fifteen feet wide and eight feet tall. For the Fu-hsü [chariot] with Tiger’s Drop and sword blades affixed, the array is fifteen feet wide and eight feet tall. Five hundred ten of them.

“For crossing over moats and ditches, there is the Flying Bridge. One section is fifteen feet wide and more than twenty feet long. Eight of them.⁷³ On top there are swivel winches to extend them by linked chains.⁷⁴

“For crossing over large bodies of water, there is the Flying River, eight of them. They are fifteen feet wide and more than twenty feet long and are extended by linked chains.

“There is also the Heavenly Float with Iron Praying Mantis, rectangular inside, circular outside, four feet or more in diameter, equipped with plantern winches. Thirty-two of them. When the Heavenly Floats are used to deploy the Flying River to cross a large lake, they are referred to as ‘Heaven’s Huang’ and also termed ‘Heaven’s Boat.’

“When in mountain forests or occupying the wilds, connect the Tiger’s Drops to make a fenced encampment. [Employ] iron chains, length of more

than twenty feet, twelve hundred sets. [Also employ] large ropes with rings,⁷⁵ girth of four inches, length of more than forty feet, six hundred; midsized ropes with rings, girth of two inches, length of forty feet or more, two hundred sets; and small braided cords with rings, length of twenty feet or more, twelve thousand.

“Wooden canopies for covering the heavy chariots, called ‘Heaven’s Rain,’* which fit together along serrated seams, each four feet wide and more than four feet long, one for each chariot. They are erected by using small iron posts.

“For cutting trees there is the Heavenly Ax, which weighs eight catties. Its handle is more than three feet long. Three hundred of them. Also the mattock with a blade six inches wide and a shaft more than five feet long, three hundred.

“Copper rams for pounding, more than five feet long, three hundred.

“Eagle claws with square hafts, iron handles, and shafts more than seven feet long, three hundred.

“Square-shafted iron pitchforks with handles more than seven feet long, three hundred.

“Square-shafted double-pronged iron pitchforks with shafts more than seven feet long, three hundred.

“Large sickles for cutting grass and light trees with shafts more than seven feet long, three hundred.

“Great oar-shaped blades, weight of eight catties, with shafts more than six feet long, three hundred.

“Iron stakes with rings affixed at top, more than three feet long, three hundred.

“Large hammers for pounding posts, weight of five catties, handles more than two feet long, one hundred twenty.

“Armored soldiers, ten thousand. Strong crossbowmen, six thousand. Halberdiers with shields, two thousand. Spearmen with shields, two thousand. Skilled men to repair offensive weapons and sharpen them, three hundred.

“These then are the general numbers required for each category when raising an army.”

King Wu said: “I accept your instructions.”

32. 3 Deployments

King Wu asked the T’ai Kung: “In employing the army there are the Heavenly Deployment, the Earthly Deployment, and the Human Deployment. What are these?”

The T'ai Kung replied: "When you accord with the sun and moon, the stars, the planets, and the handle of the Big Dipper—one on the left, one on the right, one in front, and one to the rear—this is referred to as the Heavenly Deployment.⁷⁶

"When the hills and mounds, rivers and streams are similarly to your advantage to the front, rear, left, and right, this is referred to as the Earthly Deployment.⁷⁷

"When you employ chariots and horses, when you use both the civil and martial, this is referred to as the Human Deployment."⁷⁸

"Excellent," said King Wu.

33. Urgent Battles

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If the enemy surrounds us, severing both our advance and retreat, breaking off our supply lines, what should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "These are the most distressed troops in the world! If you employ them explosively, you will be victorious; if you are slow to employ them, you will be defeated. In this situation if you deploy your troops into martial assault formations on the four sides, use your military chariots and valiant cavalry to startle and confuse their army, and urgently attack them, you can thrust across them."

King Wu asked: "After we have broken out of the encirclement, if we want to take advantage of it to gain victory, what should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The Army of the Left should urgently strike out to the left, and the Army of the Right should urgently strike out to the right. But do not get entangled in protracted fighting with the enemy over any one road. The Central Army should alternately move to the front and then the rear. Even though the enemy is more numerous, their general can be driven off."

34. Certain Escape

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords where the enemy unites from all quarters and surrounds us, cutting off our road back home and severing our supply lines. The enemy is numerous and extremely well provisioned, while the ravines and gorges are also solidly held. We must get out—how can we?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In the matter of effecting a certain escape, your equipment is your treasure while courageous fighting is foremost. If you in-

investigate and learn where the enemy's terrain is empty and vacuous, the places where there are no men, you can effect a certain escape.

"Order your generals and officers to carry the Mysterious Dark Pennants and take up the implements of war. Require the soldiers to put wooden gags into their mouths. Then move out at night. Men⁷⁹ of courage, strength, and swiftness, who will risk danger, should occupy the front to level fortifications and open a passage for the army. Skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should compose an ambushing force which will remain in the rear. Your weak soldiers, chariots, and cavalry should occupy the middle. When the deployment is complete slowly advance, being very cautious not to startle or frighten the enemy. Have the Martial Attack Fu-hsü Chariots defend the front and rear and the Martial Flanking Great Covered Chariots protect the left and right flanks.

"If the enemy should be startled, have your courageous, strong risk-takers fervently attack and advance. The weaker troops, chariots, and cavalry should bring up the rear. Your skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should conceal themselves in ambush. If you determine that the enemy is in pursuit, the men lying in ambush should swiftly attack their rear. Make your fires and drums numerous, and [attack] as if coming out of the very ground or dropping from Heaven above. If the Three Armies fight courageously no one will be able to withstand us!"

King Wu said: "In front of us lies a large body of water, or broad moat, or deep water hole which we want to cross. However, we do not have equipment such as boats and oars. The enemy has fortifications and ramparts which limit our army's advance and block off our retreat. Patrols are constantly watchful; passes are fully defended. Their chariots and cavalry press us in front; their courageous fighters attack us to the rear. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Large bodies of water, broad moats, and deep water holes are usually not defended by the enemy. If they are able to defend them, their troops will certainly be few. In such situations you should use the Flying River with winches and also Heaven's Huang to cross the army over. Our courageous, strong, skilled soldiers should move where we indicate, rushing into the enemy, breaking up his formations, all fighting to the death.

"First of all, burn the supply wagons and provisions, and clearly inform the men that those who fight courageously will live, while cowards will die.⁸⁰ After they have broken out [and crossed the bridges], order the rear elements to set a great conflagration visible from far off.⁸¹ [The troops sallying forth] must take advantage of the cover afforded by grass, trees, hillocks, and ravines. The enemy's chariots and cavalry will certainly not dare pursue

them too far. Using the flames as a marker, the first to go out should be ordered to proceed as far as the flames and then stop, reforming a four-sided attack formation. In this fashion the Three Armies will be fervent and sharp and fight courageously, and no one will be able to withstand us.”

King Wu said: “Excellent!”

35. Planning for the Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter deep streams⁸² or water in large valleys, ravines, and defiles. Our Three Armies have not yet fully forded them when Heaven lets loose a torrent, resulting in a sudden flood surge. The rear can not maintain contact with the advance portion. We don't have equipment such as pontoon bridges, nor materials such as heavy grass to stem the waters. I want to finish crossing, to keep the Three Armies from becoming bogged down. What should I do?”

The T'ai Kung said: “If the leader of the army and commander of the masses does not first establish his plans, the proper equipment will not be prepared. If his instructions are not precise and trusted, the officers and men will not be trained. Under such conditions they cannot comprise a king's army.

“In general, when the army is involved in a major campaign, everyone [should be] trained to use the equipment. For attacking a city wall or surrounding a town there are [armored] assault chariots, overlook carts, and battering rams, while for seeing inside the walls there are ‘cloud ladders’ and ‘flying towers.’ If the advance of the Three Armies is stopped, then there are the Martial Assault Great Fu-hsti Chariots. For defending both front and rear, for severing roads and blocking streets, there are the skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen who protect the two flanks. If you are encamping or building fortifications, there are the Heaven's Net, the Martial Drop, the chevaux-de-frise and the caltrops.

“In the daytime climb the cloud ladder and look off into the distance. Set up five-colored pennants and flags. At night set out ten thousand fire-cloud torches, beat the thunder drums, strike the war drums and bells, and blow the sharp-sounding whistles.

“For crossing over moats and ditches there are Flying Bridges with plantern-mounted winches and cogs. For crossing large bodies of water there are (boats called) Heaven's Huang and Flying River. For going against the waves and up current there are the Floating Ocean [rafts] and the [rope-

pulled] River Severance. When the equipment to be used by the Three Armies is fully prepared, what worries will the commander-in-chief have?”

36. Approaching the Border

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “Both the enemy and our army have reached the border where we are in a standoff. They can approach, and we can also advance. Both deployments are solid and stable; neither side dares to move first. We want to go forth and attack them, but they can also come forward. What should we do?”

The T'ai Kung said: “Divide the army into three sections. Have our advance troops deepen the moats and increase the height of the ramparts, but none of the soldiers should go forth. Array the flags and pennants, beat the leather war drums, and complete all the defensive measures. Order our rear army to stockpile supplies and foodstuffs without causing the enemy to know our intentions. Then send forth our elite troops to secretly launch a sudden attack against their center, striking where they do not expect it, attacking where they are not prepared. Since the enemy does not know our real situation, they will stop and not advance.”

King Wu asked: “Suppose the enemy knows our real situation and has fathomed our plans. If we move, they will be able to learn everything about us. Their elite troops are concealed in the deep grass. They press us on the narrow roads and are attacking where convenient for them. What should we do?”

The T'ai Kung said: “Every day have the vanguard go forth and instigate skirmishes with them in order to psychologically wear them out. Have our older and weaker soldiers drag brushwood to stir up the dust, beat the drums and shout, and move back and forth—some going to the left, some to the right, never getting closer than a hundred paces from the enemy. Their general will certainly become fatigued, and their troops will become fearful. In this situation the enemy will not dare come forward. Then our advancing troops will [unexpectedly] not stop, some [continuing forward] to attack their interior, others the exterior. With our Three Armies all fervently engaging in the battle, the enemy will certainly be defeated.”

37. Movement and Rest

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords and are confronting the enemy. The two deployments, looking across at each other, are equal in numbers and strength,

and neither dares to move first. I want to cause the enemy's general to become terrified; their officers and men to become dispirited; their battle array to become unstable; their reserve army to want to run off; and those deployed forward to constantly look about at each other. I want to beat the drums, set up a clamor, and take advantage of it so that the enemy will then run off. How can we do it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case send our troops out about ten li from the enemy and have them conceal themselves on both flanks. Send your chariots and cavalry out about one hundred // [and have them return unobserved] to assume positions cutting across both their front and rear.⁸³ Multiply the number of flags and pennants, and increase the number of gongs and drums. When the battle is joined, beat the drums, set up a clamor, and have your men all rise up together. The enemy's general will surely be afraid, and his army will be terrified. Large and small numbers will not come to each other's rescue; upper and lower ranks will not wait for each other; and the enemy will definitely be defeated."

King Wu asked: "Suppose because of the enemy's strategic configuration of power [shih | we cannot conceal troops on the flanks, and moreover our chariots and cavalry have no way to cross behind them and assume positions to both the front and rear. The enemy anticipates my thoughts and makes preemptive preparations. Our officers and soldiers are dejected, our generals are afraid. If we engage in battle we will not be victorious. What then?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Truly a serious question. In this case five days before engaging in battle, dispatch distant patrols to observe their activities and analyze their forward movement in order to prepare an ambush and await them. We must meet the enemy on deadly ground. Spread our flags and pennants out over a great distance, disperse our arrays and formations. We must race forward to meet the enemy. After the battle has been joined, suddenly retreat, beating the gongs incessantly.⁸⁴ Withdraw about three li [beyond the ambush], then turn about and attack. Your concealed troops should simultaneously arise. Some should penetrate the flanks, others attack their vanguard and rear guard positions. If the Three Armies fervently engage in battle, the enemy will certainly run off."

King Wu said: "Excellent."

38. Gongs and Drums

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we are confronting the enemy. The weather has been either extremely hot or very cold, and it has been raining incessantly day and night for ten days. The ditches and ramparts are all col-

lapsing; defiles and barricades are unguarded; our patrols have become negligent; and the officers and men are not alert. Suppose the enemy comes at night. Our Three Armies are unprepared, while the upper and lower ranks are confused and disordered. What should we do?”

The T'ai Kung said: “In general, for the Three Armies, alertness makes for solidity, laziness results in defeat. Order our guards on the ramparts to unceasingly challenge everyone. Have all those bearing the signal flags, both inside and outside the encampment, watch each other, responding to each other's orders with countersigns, but do now allow them to make any noise. All efforts should be externally oriented.

“Three thousand men should comprise a detachment.⁸⁶ Instruct and constrain them with an oath, requiring each of them to exercise vigilance at his post. If the enemy approaches, when they see our state of readiness and alertness, they will certainly turn around. [As a result] their strength will become exhausted and their spirits dejected. [At that moment] send forth our elite troops to follow and attack them.”

King Wu asked: “The enemy, knowing we are following him, conceals elite troops in ambush while pretending to continue to retreat. When we reach the ambush their troops turn back, some attacking our front, others our rear, while some press our fortifications. Our Three Armies are terrified, and in confusion fall out of formation and leave their assigned positions. What should we do?”

The T'ai Kung said: “Divide into three forces, then follow and pursue them, but do not cross beyond their ambush. When all three forces have arrived, some should attack the front and rear, others should penetrate the two flanks. Make your commands clear, choose your orders carefully. Fervently attack, advancing forward, and the enemy will certainly be defeated.”

39. Severed Routes

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where, confronting them, we have each assumed defensive positions. The enemy has severed our supply routes and occupied positions cutting across both our front and rear. If I want to engage them in battle, we cannot win; but if I want to maintain our position, we cannot hold out for long. What should we do?”

The T'ai Kung said: “In general, when you venture deep beyond the enemy's borders you must investigate the configuration and strategic advantages of the terrain, and concentrate on seeking out and improving the advantages. Rely on mountains, forests, ravines, rivers, streams, woods, and trees to create a secure defense. Carefully guard passes and bridges, and

moreover be certain you know the advantages of terrain conveyed by the various cities, towns, hills, and funeral mounds. In this way the army will be solidly entrenched. The enemy will not be able to sever our supply routes, nor be able to occupy positions cutting across our front and rear.”

King Wu asked: “Suppose after our Three Armies have passed through a large forest or across a broad marsh and are on flat, accessible terrain, due to some erroneous or lost signal from our scouts, the enemy suddenly falls upon us. If we engage them in battle, we cannot win; if we assume a defensive position, it will not be secure. The enemy has outflanked us on both sides and occupied positions cutting across our front and rear. The Three Armies are terrified. What should be done?”

The T'ai Kung said: “Now the rule for commanding an army is always to first dispatch scouts far forward so that when you are two hundred li from the enemy, you will already know their location. If the strategic configuration of the terrain is not advantageous, then use the Martial Attack chariots to form a mobile rampart and advance. Also establish two rear guard armies to the rear—the further one hundred li away, the nearer fifty li away. Thus when there is a sudden alarm or an urgent situation, both front and rear will know about it, and the Three Armies will always be able to complete [their deployment into] a solid formation, never suffering any destruction or harm.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

40. Occupying Enemy Territory

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “Suppose, being victorious in battle, we have deeply penetrated the enemy's territory and occupy his land. However, large walled cities remain that cannot be subjugated, while their second army holds the defiles and ravines, standing off against us. We want to attack the cities and besiege the towns, but I am afraid that their second army will suddenly appear and strike us. If their forces inside and outside unite in this fashion, they will oppose us from both within and without. Our Three Armies will be in chaos; the upper and lower ranks will be terrified. What should be done?”

The T'ai Kung said: “In general, when attacking cities and besieging towns, the chariots and cavalry must be kept at a distance. The encamped and defensive units must be on constant alert in order to obstruct the enemy both within and without. When the inhabitants have their food cut off—those outside being unable to transport anything in to them—those within the city walls will be afraid, and their general will certainly surrender.”¹

King Wu said: "Suppose that when the supplies inside the city are cut off—external forces being unable to transport anything in—they clandestinely make a covenant and take an oath, concoct secret plans, and then sally forth at night, throwing all their forces into a death struggle. Some of their chariots, cavalry, and elite troops assault us from within; others attack from without. The officers and troops are confused, the Three Armies defeated and in chaos. What should be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case you should divide your forces into three armies. Be careful to evaluate the terrain's configuration and then [strategically] emplace them. You must know in detail the location of the enemy's second army as well as his large cities and secondary fortifications. Leave them a passage in order to entice them to flee. Pay attention to all the preparations, not neglecting anything. The enemy will be afraid, and if they do not enter the mountains or the forests, they will return to the large towns or run off to join the second army. When their chariots and cavalry are far off, attack the front; do not allow them to escape. Since those [remaining] in the city will think that the first to go out have a direct escape route, their well-trained troops and skilled officers will certainly issue forth, with the old and weak alone remaining. When our chariots and cavalry have deeply penetrated their territory, racing far off, none of the enemy's army will dare approach. Be careful not to engage them in battle; just sever their supply routes, surround and guard them, and you will certainly outlast them.

"Do not set fire to what the people have accumulated; do not destroy their palaces or houses, nor cut down the trees at gravesites or altars. Do not kill those who surrender nor slay your captives. Instead show them benevolence and righteousness, extend your generous Virtue to them. Cause their people to say 'the guilt lies with one man.'⁸⁷ In this way the entire realm will then submit."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

41. Incendiary Warfare

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter deep grass and heavy growth which surround our army on all sides. The Three Armies have traveled several hundred li; men and horses are exhausted and have halted to rest. Taking advantage of the extremely dry weather and a strong wind, the enemy ignites fires upwind from us. Their chariots, cavalry, and elite forces are firmly concealed in ambush to our rear. The Three Armies become terrified, scatter in confusion, and run off. What can be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Under such circumstances use the cloud ladders and flying towers to look far out to the left and right, to carefully investigate front and rear. When you see the fires arise, then set fires in front of our own forces, spreading them out over the area. Also set fires to the rear. If the enemy comes, withdraw the army and take up entrenched positions on the blackened earth to await their assault. In the same way, if you see flames arise to the rear, you must move far away. If we occupy the blackened ground with our strong crossbowmen and skilled soldiers protecting the left and right flanks, we can also set fires to the front and rear. In this way the enemy will not be able to harm us."

King Wu asked: "Suppose the enemy has set fires to the left and right and also to the front and rear. Smoke covers our army, while his main force appears from over the blackened ground. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case [assuming you have prepared a burnt section of ground], disperse the Martial Attack chariots to form a fighting barrier on all four sides, and have strong crossbowmen cover the flanks. This method will not bring victory, but will also not end in defeat."

42. Empty Fortifications

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "How can I know whether the enemy's fortifications are empty⁸⁹ or full, whether they are coming or going?"

The T'ai Kung said: "A general must know the Tao of Heaven above, the advantages⁹⁰ of Earth below, and human affairs in the middle. You should mount high and look out far in order to see the enemy's changes and movements. Observe his fortifications, and then you will know whether they are empty or full. Observe his officers and troops, and then you will know whether they are coming or going."

King Wu asked: "How will I know it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Listen to see if his drums are silent, if his bells make no sound. Look to see whether there are many birds flying above the fortifications, if they were not startled [into flight]. If there are no vapors overhead, you will certainly know the enemy has tricked you with dummies.

"If enemy forces precipitously go off—but not very far—and then return before assuming proper formation, they are using their officers and men too quickly. When they act too quickly, the forward and rear are unable to maintain good order. When they cannot maintain good order, the entire battle disposition will be in chaos. In such circumstances quickly dispatch troops to attack them. If you use a small number to strike a large force, they will certainly be defeated."

V LEOPARD

43. Forest Warfare

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter a large forest which we share with the enemy in a standoff. If we assume a defensive posture, I want it to be solid, or if we fight, to be victorious. How should we proceed?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Have our Three Armies divide into the assault formation. Improve the positions the troops will occupy, and station the archers and crossbowmen outside, with those carrying spear-tipped halberds and shields inside. Cut down and clear away the grass and trees, and extensively broaden the passages in order to facilitate our deployment onto the battle site. Set our pennants and flags out on high, and carefully encourage the Three Armies without letting the enemy know our true situation. This is referred to as 'Forest Warfare'.

"The method of Forest Warfare is to form the spear bearers and halberdiers into squads of five. If the woods are not dense, cavalry can be used in support. Battle chariots will occupy the front. When opportune, they will fight; when not opportune, they will desist. Where there are numerous ravines and defiles in the forest, you must deploy [your forces] in the Assault Formation in order to be prepared both front and rear. If the Three Armies urgently attack, even though the enemy is numerous, they can be driven off. The men should fight and rest in turn, each with their section. This is the main outline of Forest Warfare."

44. Explosive Warfare

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose the enemy's [advance forces] have penetrated deep into our territory and are ranging widely, occupying our

land, and driving off our cattle and horses. Then their Three Armies arrive en masse and press us outside our city walls. Our officers and troops are sorely afraid; our people are in bonds, having been captured by the enemy. If we assume a defensive posture, I want it to be solid, or if we fight, to be victorious. What should we do?"

The T ai Kung said: "[An enemy) in situations such as this is referred to as an 'Explosive Force.' Their oxen and horses will certainly not have been fed; their officers and troops will have broken their supply routes, having explosively attacked and advanced. Order our distant towns and other armies to select their elite soldiers and urgently strike their rear. Carefully consult the calendar, for we must unite on a moonless night. The Three Armies should fight intensely, for then even though the enemy is numerous, their general can be captured."

King Wu said: "Suppose the enemy divides his forces into three or four detachments—some fighting with us and occupying our territory, others stopping to round up our oxen and horses. Their main army has not yet completely arrived, but they have had their swift invaders press us below the city walls. Therefore our Three Armies are sorely afraid. What should we do?"

The T ai Kung said: "Carefully observe the enemy. Before they have all arrived, make preparations and await them. Go out about four li from the walls and establish fortifications, setting out in good order our gongs and drums, flags and pennants. Our other troops will comprise an ambushing force. Order large numbers of strong crossbowmen to the top of the fortifications. Every hundred paces set up an 'explosive gate,' outside of which we should place the chevaux-de-frise. Our chariots and cavalry should be held outside, while our courageous, strong, fierce fighters should be secreted in this outer area. If the enemy should reach us, have our light armored foot soldiers engage them in battle, then feign a retreat. Have the forces on top of the city wall set out the flags and pennants and strike the war drums, completing all preparations to defend the city. The enemy will assume we are going to defend the wall and will certainly press an attack below it. Then release the forces lying in ambush—some to assault their interior, others to strike the exterior. Then the Three Armies should urgently press the attack—some striking the front lines, others the rear. Even their courageous soldiers will not be able to fight, while the swiftest will not have time to flee. This is termed 'Explosive Warfare.' Although the enemy is numerically superior, they will certainly run off."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

45. Strong Enemy

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords until we are opposed by the enemy's assault forces. The enemy is numerous, while we are few. The enemy is strong, while we are weak. The enemy approaches at night—some attacking the left, others the right. The Three Armies are quaking. We want to be victorious if we choose to fight and solid if we choose to maintain a defensive posture. How should we act?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case we refer to them as 'Shaking Invaders.' It is more advantageous to go out and fight; you cannot be defensive. Select skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen, together with chariots and cavalry, to comprise the right and left flanks. Then urgently strike his forward forces, quickly attacking the rear as well. Some should strike the exterior, others the interior. Their troops will certainly be confused, their generals afraid."

King Wu asked: "Suppose the enemy has blocked off our forward units some distance away and is pressing a fervent attack on our rear. He has broken up our elite troops and cut off our skilled soldiers. Our interior and exterior forces cannot communicate with each other. The Three Armies are in chaos, all running off in defeat. The officers and troops have no will to fight, the generals and commanders no desire to defend themselves. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Illustrious is your question, my king! You should make your commands clear and be careful about your orders. You should have your courageous, crack troops who are willing to confront danger sally forth—each man carrying a torch, two men to a drum. You must know the enemy's location then strike both the interior and exterior. When our secret signals have all been communicated, order them to extinguish the torches and stop beating all the drums. The interior and exterior should respond to each other, each according to the appropriate time. When our Three Armies urgently attack, the enemy will certainly be defeated and vanquished."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

46. Martial Enemy

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we suddenly encounter a martial, numerically superior enemy. If his martial chariots and valiant cavalry attack our

left and right flanks, and our Three Armies become so shaken that their flight is unstoppable, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this situation you have what is termed a defeated army. Those who are skillful in employing their forces will manage a victory. Those who are not will perish."

King Wu asked: "What does one do?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Have our most skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen, together with our martial chariots and valiant cavalry, conceal themselves on both sides of the retreat route, about three li ahead and behind our main force. When the enemy pursues us, launch a simultaneous chariot and cavalry assault from both sides. In such circumstances the enemy will be thrown into confusion, and our fleeing soldiers will stop by themselves."

King Wu continued: "Suppose the enemy's chariots and cavalry are squarely opposite ours, but the enemy is numerous while we are few, the enemy strong while we are weak. Their approach is disciplined and spirited, and our formations are unable to withstand them. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Select our skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen, and have them lie in ambush on both sides, while the chariots and cavalry deploy into a solid formation and assume position. When the enemy passes our concealed forces, the crossbowmen should fire en masse into their flanks. The chariots, cavalry, and skilled soldiers should then urgently attack their army—some striking the front, others striking the rear. Even if the enemy is numerous they will certainly flee."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

47. Crow and Cloud Formation in the Mountains

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter high mountains with large, flat rock outcroppings on top of which are numerous peaks, all devoid of grass and trees. We are surrounded on all four sides by the enemy. Our Three Armies are afraid, the officers and troops confused. I want to be solid if we choose to defend our position and victorious if we fight. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever the Three Armies occupy the heights of a mountain, they are trapped on high by the enemy. When they hold the land below the mountain, they are imprisoned by the forces above them. If you have already occupied the top of the mountain, you must prepare the Crow and Cloud Formation.⁹¹ The Crow and Cloud Formation should be pre-

pared on both the yin and yang sides of the mountain. Some will encamp on the yin side, others will encamp on the yang side. Those that occupy the yang side must prepare against [attacks from the] yin side. Those occupying the yin side must prepare against [attacks from the] yang side. Those occupying the left side of the mountain must prepare against the right side. Those on the right, against the left. Wherever the enemy can ascend [the mountain], your troops should establish external lines. If there are roads passing through the valley, sever them with your war chariots. Set your flags and pennants up high. Be cautious in commanding the Three Armies; do not allow the enemy to know your true situation. This is referred to as a 'mountain wall.'

"After your lines have been set, your officers and troops deployed, rules and orders already issued, and tactics—both orthodox and unorthodox—already planned, deploy your assault formation at the outer perimeter of the mountain, and have them improve the positions they occupy. Thereafter, divide your chariots and cavalry into the Crow and Cloud Formation. When your Three Armies urgently attack the enemy, even though the latter are numerous, their general can be captured."

48. Crow and Cloud Formation in the Marshes

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we are confronting the enemy across a river. The enemy is well equipped and numerous; we are impoverished and few. If we cross the water to attack, we will not be able to advance; while if we want to outlast them, our supplies are too few. We are encamped on salty ground. There are no towns in any direction and moreover no grass or trees. There is nothing the Three Armies can plunder, while the oxen and horses have neither fodder nor a place to graze. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The Three Armies are unprepared; the oxen and horses have nothing to eat; the officers and troops have no supplies. In this situation seek some opportunity to trick the enemy and quickly get away, setting up ambushes to your rear."

King Wu said: "The enemy cannot be deceived. My officers and troops are confused. The enemy has occupied positions cutting across both our front and rear. Our Three Armies are defeated and in flight. What then?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When you are searching for an escape route, gold and jade are essential. You must obtain intelligence from the enemy's emissaries. In this case cleverness and secrecy are your treasures."

King Wu said: "Suppose the enemy knows I have laid ambushes, so their main army is unwilling to cross the river. The general of their second army then breaks off some units and dispatches them to ford the river. My Three Armies are sorely afraid. What should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this situation divide your troops into assault formations, and have them improve their positions. Wait until all the enemy's troops have emerged, then spring your concealed troops, rapidly striking their rear. Have your strong crossbowmen on both sides shoot into their left and right flanks. Divide your chariots and cavalry into the Crow and Cloud Formation, arraying them against their front and rear. Then your Three Armies should vehemently press the attack. When the enemy sees us engaged in battle, their main force will certainly ford the river and advance. Then spring the ambushing forces, urgently striking their rear. The chariots and cavalry should assault the left and right. Even though the enemy is numerous, they can be driven off.

"In general, the most important thing in employing your troops is that when the enemy approaches to engage in battle, you must deploy your assault formations and have them improve their positions. Thereafter, divide your chariots and cavalry into the Crow and Cloud Formation. This is the unorthodox in employing your troops. What is referred to as the Crow and Cloud Formation is like the crows dispersing and the clouds forming together. Their changes and transformations are endless."⁹²

"Excellent," said King Wu.

49. The Few and the Many

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If I want to attack a large number with only a few, attack the strong with the weak, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "If you want to attack a large number with only a few, you must do it at sunset, setting an ambush in tall grass, pressing them on a narrow road. To attack the strong with the weak, you must obtain the support of a great state and the assistance of neighboring states."

King Wu asked: "We do not have any terrain with tall grass, and moreover there are no narrow roads. The enemy has already arrived; we cannot wait until sunset. I do not have the support of any great state nor furthermore the assistance of neighboring states. What then?"

The T'ai Kung said: "You should set out specious arrays and false enticements to dazzle and confuse their general, to redirect his path so that he will be forced to pass tall grass. Make his route long so you can arrange your engagement for sunset. When his advance units have not yet finished crossing

the water, his rear units have not yet reached the encampment, spring our concealed troops, vehemently striking his right and left flanks, while your chariots and cavalry stir chaos among his forward and rear units. Even if the enemy is numerous, they will certainly flee.

“To serve the ruler of a great state, to gain the submission of the officers of neighboring states, make their gifts generous and speak extremely deferentially. In this fashion you will obtain the support of a great state and the assistance of neighboring states.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

50. Divided Valleys

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter the enemy in the midst of a steep valley. I have mountains on our left, water on the right. The enemy has mountains on the right, water on the left.⁹³ They divide the valley with us in a standoff. If we choose to defend our position, I want to be solid, and victorious if we want to fight. How should we proceed?”

The T'ai Kung said: “If you occupy the left side of a mountain, you must urgently prepare [against an attack from the] right side. If you occupy the right side of a mountain, then you should urgently prepare [against an attack from the] left. If the valley has a large river but you do not have boats and oars, you should use the Heaven's Huang⁹⁴ to cross the Three Armies over. Those that have crossed should widen the road considerably in order to improve your fighting position. Use the Martial Assault chariots at the front and rear; deploy your strong crossbowmen into ranks; and solidify all your lines and formations. Employ the Martial Assault chariots to block off all the intersecting roads and entrances to the valley. Set your flags out on high ground. This posture is referred to as an ‘Army Citadel.’

“In general, the method for valley warfare is for the Martial Assault chariots to be in the forefront and the Large Covered chariots to act as a protective force. Your skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should cover the left and right flanks. Three thousand men will comprise one detachment, which must be deployed in the assault formation. Improve the positions the soldiers occupy. Then the Army of the Left should advance to the left, the Army of the Right to the right, and the Army of the Center to the front—all attacking and advancing together. Those that have already fought should return to their detachment's original positions, the units fighting and resting in succession until you have won.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

VI

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51. Dispersing and Assembling

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If the king, leading the army, has dispersed the Three Armies to several locations and wants to have them reassemble at a specific time for battle, how should he constrain them with oaths, rewards, and punishments so that he can achieve it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, the Way to employ the military, the masses of the Three Armies, must be to have the changes of dividing and reuniting.⁹⁵ The commanding general should first set the place and day for battle, then issue full directives and particulars to the generals and commanders setting the time, indicating whether to attack cities or besiege towns, and where each should assemble. [He should] clearly instruct them about the day for battle and even the quarter hour by the water clock. The commanding general should then establish his encampment, array his battle lines, put up a gnomon and the official gate, clear the road, and wait. When all the generals and commanders have arrived, compare their arrival [with the designated time]. Those who arrived before the appointed time should be rewarded. Those who arrived afterward should be executed. In this way both the near and distant will race to assemble, and the Three Armies will arrive together, uniting their strength to engage in the battle."

52. Military Vanguard

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "In general, when employing the army it is essential to have military chariots, courageous cavalry, a first-assault wave, a hand-picked vanguard, and then a perceived opportunity to strike the enemy. In which situations can we strike?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Anyone who wants to launch a strike should carefully scrutinize and investigate fourteen changes in the enemy. When [any of]

these changes becomes visible, attack, for the enemy will certainly be defeated.”

King Wu asked: “May I hear about these fourteen changes?”

The T'ai Kung said: “When the enemy has begun to assemble they can be attacked.

“When the men and horses have not yet been fed they can be attacked.

“When the seasonal or weather conditions are not advantageous to them they can be attacked.

“When they have not secured good terrain they can be attacked.

“When they are fleeing they can be attacked.

“When they are not vigilant they can be attacked.

“When they are tired and exhausted they can be attacked.

“When the general is absent from the officers and troops they can be attacked.

“When they are traversing long roads they can be attacked.

“When they are fording rivers they can be attacked.

“When the troops have not had any leisure time they can be attacked.

“When they encounter the difficulty of precipitous ravines or are on narrow roads they can be attacked.

“When their battle array is in disorder they can be attacked.

“When they are afraid they can be attacked.”

53. Selecting Warriors

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “What is the Way to select warriors?”

The T'ai Kung replied: “Within the army there will be men with great courage and strength who are willing to die and even take pleasure in suffering wounds. They should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors Who Risk the Naked Blade.’

“Those who have fierce ch'i, who are robust and courageous, strong and explosive, should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors Who Penetrate the Lines.’

“Those who are extraordinary in appearance, who bear long swords and advance with measured tread in good order should be assembled into a company and called ‘Courageous, Elite Warriors.’

“Those who can jump well, straighten iron hooks, are powerful, have great strength, and can scatter and smash the gongs and drums [and] destroy the flags and pennants should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors of Courage and Strength.’

“Those who can scale heights and cover great distances, who are light of foot and excel at running should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors of the Invading Army.’

“Those who, while serving the ruler, lost their authority and want to again display their merit should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors Who Fight to the Death.’

“Those who are relatives of slain generals, the sons or brothers of generals, who want to avenge their deaths, should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors Who Are Angry unto Death.’

“Those who are lowly, poor, and angry, who want to satisfy their desires, should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors Committed to Death.’*

“Adopted sons⁹⁶ and slaves, who want to cover up their pasts and achieve fame, should be assembled into a company and called the ‘Incited Dispirited.’

“Those who have been imprisoned and then spared corporeal punishment, who want to escape from their shame, should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors Fortunate to Be Used.’

“Those who combine skill and technique, who can bear heavy burdens for long distances, should be assembled into a company and called ‘Warriors Awaiting Orders.’

“These are the army’s selected warriors. You cannot neglect their examination.”

54. Teaching Combat

King Wu asked the T’ai Kung: “When we assemble the masses of the Three Armies and want to have the officers and men assimilate and become practiced⁹⁸ in the Way for teaching combat, how should we proceed?”

The T’ai Kung said: “For leading the Three Armies you must have the constraints of the gongs and drums by which to order and assemble the officers and masses. The generals should clearly instruct the commanders and officers, explaining the orders three times—thereby teaching them the use of weapons, mobilization, and stopping, all to be in accord with the method for changing the flags and signal pennants.

“Thus when teaching the commanders and officers, one man who has completed his study of combat instructions will extend⁹⁹ them to ten men. Ten men who have completed their study of combat instructions will extend them to one hundred men. One hundred men who have completed their study of combat instructions will extend them to one thousand men. One thousand men who have completed their study of combat instructions will

extend them to ten thousand men. Ten thousand men who have completed their study of combat instructions will extend them to the masses of the Three Armies.

“When the methods of large-scale warfare are successfully taught, they will be extended to the masses of millions. In this fashion you will be able to realize a Great Army and establish your awesomeness throughout the realm.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

55. Equivalent Forces

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “When chariots and infantry engage in battle, one chariot is equivalent to how many infantrymen? How many infantrymen are equivalent to one chariot? When cavalry and infantry engage in battle, one cavalryman is equivalent to how many infantrymen? How many infantrymen are equivalent to one cavalryman? When chariots and cavalry engage in battle, one chariot is equivalent to how many cavalrymen? How many cavalrymen are equivalent to one chariot?”¹⁰⁰

The T'ai Kung said: “Chariots are the feathers and wings of the army, the means to penetrate solid formations, to press strong enemies, and to cut off their flight. Cavalry are the army's fleet observers, the means to pursue a defeated army, to sever supply lines, to strike roving forces.

“Thus when chariots and cavalry are not engaged in battle with the enemy, one cavalryman is not able to equal one foot soldier. However, after the masses of the Three Armies have been arrayed in opposition to the enemy, when fighting on easy terrain the rule is that one chariot is equivalent to eighty infantrymen, and eighty infantrymen are equivalent to one chariot. One cavalryman is equivalent to eight infantrymen; eight infantrymen are equivalent to one cavalryman. One chariot is equivalent to ten cavalrymen; ten cavalrymen are equivalent to one chariot.

“The rule for fighting on difficult terrain is that one chariot is equivalent to forty infantrymen, and forty infantrymen are equivalent to one chariot. One cavalryman is equivalent to four infantrymen; four infantrymen are equivalent to one cavalryman. One chariot is equivalent to six cavalrymen; six cavalrymen are equivalent to one chariot.

“Now chariots and cavalry are the army's martial weapons. Ten chariots can defeat one thousand men; one hundred chariots can defeat ten thousand men. Ten cavalrymen can drive off one hundred men, and one hundred cavalrymen can run off one thousand men. These are the approximate numbers.”

King Wu asked: “What are the numbers for chariot and cavalry officers and their formations?”

The T'ai Kung said: "For the chariots—a leader for five chariots, a captain for fifteen, a commander for fifty, and a general for one hundred.

"For battle on easy terrain five chariots comprise one line. The lines are forty paces apart, the chariots from left to right ten paces apart, with detachments sixty paces apart. On difficult terrain the chariots must follow the roads, with ten comprising a company and twenty a regiment.¹⁰¹ Front to rear spacing should be twenty paces, left to right six paces, with detachments thirty-six paces apart. For five chariots there is one leaden. If they venture off the road more than a li in any direction, they should return to the original road.

"As for the number of officers in the cavalry: a leader for five men; a captain for ten; a commander for one hundred; a general for two hundred.

"The rule for fighting on easy terrain: Five cavalymen will form one line, and front to back their lines should be separated by twenty paces, left to right four paces, with fifty paces between detachments.

"On difficult terrain the rule is front to back, ten paces; left to right, two paces; between detachments, twenty-five paces. Thirty cavalymen comprise a company; sixty form a regiment. For ten cavalymen there is a captain. [In action] they should not range more than one hundred paces, after which they should circle back and return to their original positions."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

56. Martial Chariot Warriors

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "How does one select warriors for the chariots?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The rule for selecting warriors for the chariots is to pick men under forty years of age, seven feet five inches¹⁰² or taller, whose running ability is such that they can pursue a galloping horse, race up to it, mount it, and ride it forward and back, left and right, up and down, all around. They should be able to quickly furl up the flags and pennants and have the strength to fully draw an eight-picul crossbow. They should practice shooting front and back, left and right, until thoroughly skilled. They are termed 'Martial Chariot Warriors.' You cannot but be generous to them."

57. Martial Cavalry Warriors

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "How do you select warriors for the cavalry?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The rule for selecting cavalry warriors is to take those under forty, who are at least seven feet five inches tall, strong and quick, who surpass the average. Men who, while racing a horse, can fully draw a bow and shoot. Men who can gallop forward and back, left and right, and all around, both advancing and withdrawing. Men who can jump over moats and ditches, ascend hills and mounds, gallop through narrow confines, cross large marshes, and race into a strong enemy, causing chaos among their masses. They are called 'Martial Cavalry Warriors.' You cannot but be generous to them."

58. Battle Chariots

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What about battle chariots?"

The T'ai Kung responded: "The infantry values knowing changes and movement; the chariots value knowing the terrain's configuration; the cavalry values knowing the side roads and the unorthodox [ch9\ Way. Thus these three armies bear the same name, but their employment differs.

"In general, in chariot battles there are ten types of terrain on which death is likely and eight on which victory can be achieved."

King Wu asked: "What are the ten fatal terrains¹⁰³ like?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "If after advancing there is no way to withdraw, this is fatal terrain for chariots.

"Passing beyond narrow defiles to pursue the enemy some distance, this is terrain which will exhaust the chariots.

"When the land in front makes advancing easy, while that to the rear is treacherous, this is terrain that will cause hardship for the chariots.

"Penetrating into narrow and obstructed areas from which escape will be difficult, this is terrain on which the chariots may be cut off.

"If the land is collapsing, sinking, and marshy, with black mud sticking to everything, this is terrain which will labor the chariots.

"To the left is precipitous while to the right is easy, with high mounds and sharp hills. This is terrain contrary to [the use of] chariots.

"Luxuriant grass runs through the fields, and there are deep, watery channels throughout. This is terrain which thwarts [the use) of chariots.

"When the chariots are few in number, the land easy, and one is not confronted by enemy infantry, this is terrain on which the chariots may be defeated.

"To the rear are water-filled ravines and ditches, to the left deep water, and to the right steep hills. This is terrain on which chariots are destroyed.

“It has been raining day and night for more than ten days without stopping. The roads have collapsed so that it’s not possible to advance or to escape to the rear. This is terrain which will sink the chariots.

“These ten are deadly terrain for chariots. Thus they are the means by which the stupid general will be captured and the wise general will be able to escape.”

King Wu asked: “What about the eight conditions of terrain¹⁰⁴ that result in victory?”

The T’ai Kung replied: “When the enemy’s ranks—front and rear—are not yet settled, strike into them.

“When their flags and pennants are in chaos, their men and horses frequently shifting about, then strike into them.

“When some of their officers and troops advance while others retreat; when some move to the left, others to the right, then strike into them.

“When their battle array is not yet solid, while their officers and troops are looking around at each other, then strike into them.

“When in advancing they appear full of doubt, and in withdrawing they are fearful, strike into them.

“When the enemy’s Three Armies are suddenly frightened, all of them rising up in great confusion, strike into them.

“When you are fighting on easy terrain and twilight has come without being able to disengage from the battle, then strike into them.

“When, after traveling far, at dusk they are encamping and their Three Armies are terrified, strike into them.

“These eight constitute conditions¹⁰⁵ in which the chariots will be victorious.

“If the general is clear about these ten injurious conditions and eight victorious possibilities, then even if the enemy surrounds him on all sides—attacking with one thousand chariots and ten thousand cavalry—he will be able to gallop to the front and race to the sides and in ten thousand battles invariably be victorious.”

“Excellent,” said King Wu.

59. Cavalry in Battle

King Wu asked the T’ai Kung: “How should we employ the cavalry in battle?”

The T’ai Kung said: “For the cavalry there are ten [situations that can produce] victory and nine [that will result in] defeat.”

King Wu asked: “What are the ten [situations that can produce] victory?”

The T'ai Kung replied: "When the enemy first arrives and their lines and deployment are not yet settled, the front and rear not yet united, then strike into their forward cavalry, attack the left and right flanks. The enemy will certainly flee.

"When the enemy's lines and deployment are well-ordered and solid, while their officers and troops want to fight, our cavalry should outflank them but not go far off. Some should race away, some race forward. Their speed should be like the wind, their explosiveness like thunder, so that the daylight becomes as murky as dusk. Change our flags and pennants several times; also change our uniforms. Then their army can be conquered.

"When the enemy's lines and deployment are not solid, while their officers and troops will not fight, press upon them both front and rear, make sudden thrusts on their left and right. Outflank and strike them, and the enemy will certainly be afraid.

"When, at sunset, the enemy wants to return to camp¹⁰⁶ and their Three Armies are terrified, if we can outflank them on both sides, urgently strike their rear, pressing the entrance to their fortifications, not allowing them to go in. The enemy will certainly be defeated.

"When the enemy, although lacking the advantages of ravines and defiles for securing their defenses, has penetrated deeply and ranged widely into distant territory, if we sever their supply lines they will certainly be hungry.

"When the land is level and easy and we see enemy cavalry approaching from all four sides, if we have our chariots and cavalry strike into them, they will certainly become disordered.

"When the enemy runs off in flight, their officers and troops scattered and in chaos, if some of our cavalry outflank them on both sides while others obstruct them to the front and rear, their general can be captured.

"When at dusk the enemy is turning back while his soldiers are extremely numerous, his lines and deployment will certainly become disordered. We should have our cavalry form platoons often and regiments of one hundred, group the chariots into squads of five and companies of ten, and set out a great many flags and pennants intermixed with strong crossbowmen. Some should strike their two flanks, others cut off the front and rear, and then the enemy's general can be taken prisoner. These are the ten [situations in which] the cavalry can be victorious."

King Wu asked: "What about the nine [situations which produce] defeat?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever the cavalry penetrates the ranks of the enemy but does not destroy their formation so that the enemy feigns flight, only to turn their chariots and cavalry about to strike our rear—this is a situation¹⁰⁸ in which the cavalry will be defeated.

“When we pursue a fleeing enemy into confined ground, ranging far into their territory without stopping, until they ambush both our flanks and sever our rear—this is a situation in which the cavalry will be encircled.

“When we go forward but there is no road back, we enter but there is no way out, this is referred to as ‘penetrating a Heavenly Well,’¹⁰⁹ ‘being buried in an Earthly Cave.’ This is fatal terrain for the cavalry.

“When the way by which we enter is constricted but the way out is distant; their weak forces can attack our strong ones; and their few can attack our many—this is terrain on which the cavalry will be exterminated.

“When there are great mountain torrents, deep valleys, tall luxuriant grass, forests and trees—these are conditions which will exhaust the cavalry.

“When there is water on the left and right, while ahead are large hills, and to the rear high mountains, and the Three Armies are fighting between the bodies of water while the enemy occupies both the interior and exterior ground—this is terrain that means great difficulty for the cavalry.

“When the enemy has cut off our supply lines, and if we advance we will not have any route by which to return—this is troublesome terrain for the cavalry.

“When we are sinking into marshy ground while advancing and retreating must both be through quagmires—this is worrisome terrain for the cavalry.

“When on the left there are deep water sluices, and on the right there are gullies and hillocks but below the heights the ground appears level—good terrain for advancing, retreating, and enticing an enemy—this terrain is a pitfall for the cavalry.

“These nine comprise fatal terrain for cavalry, the means by which the enlightened general will keep [the enemy] far off and escape and the ignorant general will be entrapped and defeated.”

60. The Infantry in Battle

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: “What about when infantry engage in battle with chariots and cavalry?”

The T'ai Kung said: “When infantry engage in battle with chariots and cavalry, they must rely on hills and mounds, ravines and defiles. The long weapons and strong crossbows should occupy the fore; the short weapons and weak crossbows should occupy the rear, firing and resting in turn. Even if large numbers of the enemy's chariots and cavalry should arrive, they must maintain a solid formation and fight intensely while skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen prepare against [attacks from] the rear.”

King Wu said: "Suppose there are no hills or mounds, ravines or defiles. The enemy arrives, and it is both numerous and martial. Their chariots and cavalry outflank us on both sides, and they are making sudden thrusts against our front and rear positions. Our Three Armies are terrified and fleeing in chaotic defeat. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Order our officers and troops to set up the *chevaux-de-frise* and wooden caltrops, arraying the oxen and horses by units of five in their midst, and have them establish a four-sided martial assault formation. When you see the enemy's chariots and cavalry are about to advance, our men should evenly spread out the caltrops and dig ditches around the rear, making them five feet deep and wide. It is called the 'Fate of Dragon Grass.'

"Our men should take hold of the *chevaux-de-frise* and advance on foot. The chariots should be arrayed as ramparts and pushed forward and back. Whenever they stop set them up as fortifications. Our skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should prepare against the left and right flanks. Afterward, order our Three Armies to fervently fight without respite."

"Excellent," said King Wu.